

new masses

Torture In Belgrade

A first hand document revealing what it
means to be a Communist in Yugoslavia.
Translated by LOUIS ADAMIC

Undermining Hitler

ERNST HENRI

The Strange Case of Cuba

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"THUNDER OVER MEXICO"

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DRAWINGS by Gellert, Gropper, Kruckman, Scheel,
Soglow — FICTION and REVIEWS

SEPTEMBER, 1933

An Editorial Announcement

With this issue the New Masses ceases publication as a monthly magazine. Its next appearance will be as a weekly.

In a sense, this decision has been forced upon us. Events are moving too swiftly for a monthly. In the course of four weeks situations arise, develop, and are succeeded by new and more pressing problems. History is being written with breath-taking rapidity. A swifter tempo of reporting, interpretation and comment is no longer merely desirable, it is vitally necessary.

We believe that never before has there been so great a need—and so great an opportunity—for a weekly revolutionary magazine. The bitter facts of four years of crisis have blasted the illusions of vast numbers. Millions are questioning the hitherto accepted tenets of American capitalism: “Any man who wants to work, can work.” “There’s always room at the top.” “America—the land of opportunity.” “A car in every garage.”

This vast silent questioning has met no adequate answer in the press—daily, weekly, or monthly. There is a widespread, and growing, demand for more complete and realistic news of what is actually happening under the NRA. Why was the United Front delegation’s historic visit to President Roosevelt, to insist on labor’s fundamental rights, completely ignored in all the papers except the Communist press? Why has the naked Fascist character of the Soft Coal Code with its absolute prohibition of strikes been completely concealed from the people? For four years the press of this country has carried on a unanimous conspiracy of silence and falsehood about the crisis. For four years the so-called “liberal” weeklies have wobbled on the one hand and wavered on the other, grasped

at straws, “looked before and after, and pined for what is not.”

The weekly New Masses will meet the demand for an uncompromising revolutionary interpretation of the news. It will cover the entire American scene—economics, politics, literature and the arts.

We are organizing our forces to begin publishing the New Masses as a weekly not later than the first of the year. We are grouping around the magazine, and enlisting the enthusiastic support of the best writers, critics, journalists and artists in the United States. We believe the weekly New Masses will represent the combined efforts of the most brilliant contributors writing and drawing in this country.

The weekly New Masses will positively NOT be edited for a limited audience of intellectuals. It will reach out for the broadest possible circulation among all stratas of workers and professionals. Where the monthly New Masses, limited by its publication period and its narrower appeal, reached thousands, we firmly believe that the weekly will reach scores of thousands.

The price of the weekly New Masses will be 10 cents; a yearly subscription, \$3.50. Present subscribers to the monthly will of course be carried as subscribers of the weekly. We have set a goal of 20,000 paid subscribers to be secured before the first publication date.

The promotion work for the weekly gets under way immediately. At this time readers of the New Masses who wish to help make the success of the weekly certain and rapid are urged to do this: Send us at once the names of as many persons as you know who you believe will be interested in the weekly New Masses.

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Editorial Board: JOSEPH FREEMAN, WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, HUGO GELLERT, WILLIAM GROPPER, MICHAEL GOLD, LOUIS LOZOWICK, MOISSAYE J. OLGIN, JOSHUA KUNITZ, HERMAN MICHELSON.

CONTRIBUTORS:—Phil Bard, Emjo Basshe, Jacob Burck, Whittaker Chambers, Robert Cruden, Jack Conroy, Adolph Dehn, Robert Dunn, John Dos Passos, Kenneth Fearing, Ed Falkowski, Hugo Gellert, Eugene Gordon, Horace Gregory, William Hernandez, Langston Hughes, Joseph Kalar, I. Klein, Joshua Kunitz, Melvin P. Levy, Louis Lozowick, H. H. Lewis, Norman Macleod, A. B. Magil, Scott Nearing, Myra Page, Paul Peters, Walter Quirt, Louis Ribak, Anna Rochester, E. Merrill Root, James Rorty, Martin Russak, Esther Shemitz, William Siegel, Upton Sinclair, Agnes Smedley, Otto Soglow, Herman Spector, Bennett Stevens, Joseph Vogel, Mary H. Vorse, Keene Wallis, Jim Waters, Art Young.
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What It Means to Be a Communist In Yugoslavia

Translated by Louis Adamic

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE:—While in Yugoslavia, during the past year I met some of the 15,000 men and women, Communists and other revolutionaries, who had been tortured in recent years by police sadists in the employ of King Alexander's military-fascist dictatorship, backed by western capitalist powers and international finance capital, which is rapidly enslaving the country, along with the rest of the Balkans and eastern Europe. They told me of their own and others' experiences. To a few I suggested they write their stories, and below is the narrative of a young Communist I met last fall in Dalmatia (which is not his home), shortly after his emergence from a state prison. It is a typical case. For the truth of the story as the boy wrote it I vouch in every detail. In translation I changed it only in so far as I thought necessary to hide the author's identity and in order not to betray anything connected with the work of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia not already known to the police. I deleted a few passages which might only confuse the non-Yugoslav reader, and, in parenthesis, made a few additions and explanations.

I was reading in my room that afternoon, when, at about 3 o'clock, someone knocked. "Come!"—and there entered a man of medium height and offensive personality who, with a twisted grin on his face, introduced himself as Comrade Marinkovich, or some such common name, of Belgrade. He said he was enroute to Austria, stopping off in my town to see his friend, Comrade X. Did I know where X. lived? He explained he had received my address from Comrade Y, a Communist in Belgrade, whom I know but who I was sure didn't have my address, as I had just moved.

I realized at once that my visitor was a political detective. I had never seen him before. His manner and speech were Serb. I surmised the war from the *Glavnyacha* (police headquarters for political "criminals") in Belgrade.

Afraid he might kill me in my room, as I knew such things were happening, I thought as fast as I could and saying I

wasn't certain just where X lived but possibly could locate him, suggested we go out.

We walked around awhile. Turning, I noticed a few paces behind, two local detectives, whom I knew by sight. The Belgrade detective urged me to exert myself to find X. I stalled. By and by his grin became undisguisedly evil and he looked at me in a way that I saw he realized that I knew he was a detective.

For a minute I was too scared to utter a word.

Of a sudden, in a little frequented street, the Belgrade detective shoved me into a doorway, then further into the deserted vestibule, and the two local detective rushed in and grabbed me.

The Belgrade man hit me in the face with his fist, which made me a bit groggy; nonetheless, I understood when he said, "Now, you Communist—, where is X?"

I said nothing; he slapped me. "I don't suppose you know who I am." He paused, glaring at me. Then slowly, "I—am—Vuykovich—, director of Hotel *Glavnyacha* in Belgrade. Ever heard of me?" He slapped me the fourth time.

Vuykovich! Of course I knew of him: one of the leading sadists of the Belgrade *Glavnyacha*. He continued to glare at me, a loathsome grin on his face. . . . "Now," I thought, "I'm finished!"

"Where does X live?"

"I don't know."

He asked me the same question four or five times, hitting me every time I said I didn't know. Somehow, I couldn't utter anything else, though the third or fourth time, I don't know why, my answer struck me funny. The words "Now I'm finished!" throbbed in my mind. From a sense of desperation I began to sink into a state of apathy and resignation.

"I'll kill you!" hissed Vuykovich through his yellow teeth, tapping me on the head with the muzzle of his revolver. The tap, though it resulted in a long cut, didn't hurt me; I was too numbed by fear and the painful blows and humiliating slaps in the face. "Open your mouth! Where does X live!"



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(X was part of the underground system whereby Communist literature comes into Yugoslavia from across the border. As such he was guilty of a crime for which the Act for the Safeguarding of the State provides a sentence of from five to ten years, which for a "political" in most Yugoslav prisons nowadays is practically equivalent to death).

"I don't know," I answered.

He hit me over my right ear with the butt of his pistol. Again, though the force of it caused my head to swing to the opposite side, I barely felt the blow. A moment later, however, I became conscious of blood trickling down behind my ear.

Vuykovich then motioned the local detectives to take me out.

Outside stood an automobile I hadn't noticed before; no doubt it had followed us around. They pushed me into the car. Vuykovich walked off and we drove away. I was in the back seat with the two detectives. The chauffeur was a local plainclothes man, too. After we started no one said anything to me.

Gradually, as we drove for a few minutes, my numbness or apathy, or whatever it was, left me. I wondered: where did Vuykovich go? Maybe back to my room, to search it; if so, he wouldn't find anything incriminating. Perhaps he went after someone else. . . . I found myself thinking intensely, feverishly, as I had never thought before. "God damn these sadistic perverts," I said to myself, "I'll fight! I must save myself!" Then: "But I mustn't say anything which might betray the whereabouts of X or anyone else. I'm a Communist!" I remembered the order of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia covering such a predicament as I had fallen into. I was to endure all tortures rather than betray anything connected with our work. Suddenly I felt very strong and proud. "I'm a Communist! . . . Perhaps my fate is to die for Communism. Others have died."

The automobile stopped in the courtyard of the local police headquarters. Inside, four detectives and a uniformed gendarme surrounded me.

"Where is X?"

"I don't know."

Biff! "Where is the bundle (of Communist literature) he brought into the country last week?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Biff! . . .

And so on for half-an-hour. Every time I said "I don't know" or gave no reply, one or the other of the men slapped or punched me with his fist.

Vuykovich returned. "Well, has the Communist ——— changed his mind, or does he still insist he doesn't know where X is?"

"Still doesn't know."

Vuykovich took charge of the examination. In a low, casual voice: "Tell us all you know!"

"I don't know anything."

"I'll open your memory!" he yelled. "You long-legged Red cur. Do you realize I am Vuykovich? For nine years I'm in this business, and look at me: still alive and healthy, and I'll never rest till all you Communist ——— and all your kin are gone where you belong! . . . Talk! Where is X? What became of the bundle he brought in? How did he get over the border, and where?"

"I don't know anything."

"Do you know what happened to Bracanovich?" (Bracan Bracanovich, a Serb Communist, was killed in the Belgrade Glavnyacha two years ago; more of him in a minute.)

"I never heard of him," I lied.

"You lowdown liar!" yelled Vuykovich and slammed me in the face. "You know very well who he was. We killed him like a rat. We'll do the same with you, except that we won't bother taking you to Belgrade, but finish you right here . . . I suppose you never heard of Vulch, either? (Stanko Vulch, a Slovenian worker- Communist). There was twice as much of him as there is of you, you skinny bastard, and he spoke. Finally we liquidated him anyhow. Packed him into a crate and threw him into the Danube. . . . Think it over. If you talk, we'll be sweet to you and let you go. If not, we'll force you to talk, then liquidate you just as we did Vulch."

"I don't know anything."

Vuykovich flew into a rage. "F——— your bitch-mother!" He knocked me to the floor, then kicked me in the stomach. To evade a second kick in the same spot, I turned over just in time to catch the boot in the small of my back. A third kick got me in the nape.

Instinctively, reflexively, rather than intentionally, I kicked Vuykovich in the ankle and, my whole body in pain, simultaneously raised myself to my knees.

"You Communist dog!" — and with all his might Vuykovich kicked me with his right foot in the throat, directly under the chin.

I went down again, but retained consciousness. My mouth was full of blood. I thought to myself, "I'll act as if I'm unconscious, then maybe he won't kick me any more."

The telephone rang. Vuykovich took off the receiver and said, "Hello, this is Vuykovich: who is there?"

Terrific pains in my throat, back and stomach forced me to move, lest I lose consciousness. I sat up. My head whirled. I felt nauseous. I leaned against the wall. Vuykovich's voice and words, as he spoke on the 'phone, sounded miles away:

"Yes, yes, Chief. I'll liquidate him right here and now. . . . Very well, Chief . . . I quite agree, no use giving him a train ride to Belgrade. . . ."

It occurred to me that in all probability it was a sham conversation. I had heard from comrades who had undergone torture before me that Vuykovich was in the habit of getting telephone calls from "the Chief" while in the midst of an examination. But at the moment I wished it was true; that they really would "liquidate" me. I was in indescribable agony.

Vuykovich spoke a while longer. I scarcely listened. Then he hung up.

"Heard that?" His voice, as he turned to me, was a stab in my ears. "The chief says to liquidate you; not to bother dragging you to Belgrade. I give you just five minutes. If you don't talk by then, it's your end. The point is: where is X?—where is the stuff he brought in last week?"

He walked out of the room and I immediately felt much better. Then the local sleuths began to grill me. Their questions were stupid, but served to dig me out of my semi-unconsciousness. I commenced to think again. I knew this was only the beginning, a feeble introduction to systematic torture I would get if they took me to Belgrade, which probably would be the case. "I must not let them win! I must live." Then: "But I must be a true Communist," and a wave of warmth, pride and strength went over me.



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I reflected about the struggle in me between my will-to-live and the numbness induced by pain and humiliation. Now I managed to raise myself out of the latter apparently on my own power, as had happened in the automobile; then the detective unwittingly helped me with something he said.

"Don't be a fool! We don't beat you because we hate you. We're trying to knock some sense into you. Talk—then we'll get you a job on the force. Two thousand a month."—These words of the local detective, I remember, had a tonic effect on me. Instantly, there flamed up in me the consciousness I was a worker's son and had been in the class struggle when still in my mother's body. Instantly, it was clear to me I must exert all my power of endurance of physical pain. I must not let pain and humiliation numb my mind or force me to confess or betray anything.

Vuykovich returned. I didn't talk; so, since the local police headquarters had no torture equipment, such as he had in Belgrade, he partly undressed me, grabbed and squeezed my testes till I all but swooned. "Talk, you Communist dog, talk!" he jeered. I couldn't get a sound out of me, had I wanted to. I struggled against fainting. Now things went dark before my eyes, then I saw Vuykovich's sadistic face again . . . Finally, he released me, kicked me once more in the stomach, and I lay against the wall in a whirl of pain, completely exhausted. I had terrible cramps in my stomach. I think I vomitted a little and a feeble thought trembled in my head: "This is the limit. I can't endure anything worse."

Vuykovich stood over me and spoke, "Wait till I get you to Belgrade. In fifteen minutes you'll tell everything you know. Remember Vulch and Bracanovich!"

I barely heard him, but the names of Vulch and Bracanovich stirred me again. They were our hero-martyrs. All at once I was keenly, widely conscious again. My testes, my face, stomach, throat and back ached: my whole body ached, but somehow I thought of Cracanovich, whom I had known personally. I thought of over 100 revolutionists, who like Vulch and Bracanovich, had been killed in Yugoslavia in recent years, by order of the Ministry of the Interior before coming to trial in the Court for the Safeguarding of the State. Besides Bracanovich, I had known six others who had been murdered by paid gangsters, to use an American term, of King Alexander's regime. "Well," I said to myself, "if Vuykovich kills me, I'll be in good company."

With this thought, incredible as it may seem, I dozed off, very likely because of exhaustion from pain. The next thing I knew a gendarme kicked me in the hip, pulled me up, then half pushed and half dragged me down a corridor and into a cell. I lacked the strength to go to the wooden bunk, on which there was a blanket. As the gendarme slammed the cell-door, my knees bent under me and I folded up on the brick floor. For a while I suffered horrible pains all over. Finally slumber, stupor or unconsciousness, whatever it was, took mercy on me and I lay there all night.

In the morning a gendarme woke me up and said, "Listen: they're going to give you another chance here before taking you to Belgrade. Be sensible and talk." I suppose he was sorry for me and thought he was giving me good advice.

He took me back to the office. There was Vuykovich again and four other agents. To all their questions I said "I don't know anything," or kept silent, so they beat and kicked me for two and a half hours (a clock was on the wall), Vuykovich squeezed and pulled my testes again—but there is no use describing the procedure in detail. It was like the day before; only worse because the blows and kicks, etc., came on top of the old aches. I came near losing consciousness several times; then regained myself. It was the old struggle between the vulnerable body and the mind. The church bells outside were ringing noontime when two gendarmes picked me up and dragged me back to the cell. I was more dead than alive.

I lay in stupor till evening. Then a gendarme brought me my tie, which had gotten untied during the morning and remarked I was a fool: they were taking me to Belgrade.

The new *Glavnyacha* in Belgrade, which is the central office of the regime's political police, is a 5-story building (not far from the Royal Palace). The old *Glavnyacha*, opposite the University, became too small after King Alexander proclaimed himself dictator; now all political cross-examinations take place on the top floor of the new headquarters.

Vuykovich, assisted by three gendarmes, brought with him, besides me, six other Communists, two of whom I knew. They took us to the office on the fifth floor.

At the desk sat a long, skinny individual in shirt-sleeves, his thin lips screwed into a diabolical grin. "Ah, more guests! Who are the gentlemen, Vuykovich? . . . Oh so, merchants from Red Paradise! . . ." His voice was a squeal. Later I learned his name was Stankovich, one of the most bestial members of the secret police.

Vuykovich went out.

Stankovich pressed a button and there came gendarmes and a civilian. The latter was also tall and thin, large pimples on his nauseating face.

"A new bunch, eh!" he leered; then, reading off our names from a list, went from one to the other and dealt each a blow in the face. This was Kosmayats, perhaps the foremost sadist in the Belgrade *Glavnyacha*. He surpasses both Vuykovich and Stankovich. Sadism flames in his face. Subsequently I heard from fellow prisoners that, when in his hands, they had observed in his bestiality an obvious sexual relish. Before his becoming a secret agent he was a waiter, Vuykovich was a mechanic. I don't know what Stankovich was before. Of some of the other leading spirits of the political *Glavnyacha* it is known that they are ex-labor union officials. One had become a detective after he had stolen the funds of the union of which he was secretary-treasurer. The members of the union had sued him before a civil court, which had sentenced him to a term in prison, but soon after he had been freed on his consent to become a white terrorist. Some are former members of the Communist Party. Some are officers of Wrangel's army. These agents receive comparatively small pay—from 2,000 (\$25) to 3,000 (\$37.50) dinars a month—, but they keep practically everything they find on those they arrest. In all respects, they are their own bosses, having a free hand to do with prisoners what they please: and they can arrest anyone they like. As Stankovich said in my hearing, "We're the highest court in the country. We're the Constitution!" Of course, many persons they arrest have no notion of Communism or the revolution.

After punching us for half-an-hour or so, Kosmayats and two gendarmes took us through a narrow door into a corridor. Passing the cells, I glimpsed prisoners tied hand-and-foot on the floor. Those not tied apparently were uncon-



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cious, lying on the floor. These in the cells along this corridor had such serious charges against them as bringing in literature from across the border, distributing it among the industrial proletariat, or having been in Russia. They had been tortured in the past few days.

Us seven, whom they evidently considered minor fry, valuable to them only as probable containers of information about others, they herded into a huge room called the *mansarda*, with barred windows, the floor along the walls strewn with about 20 prisoners, recent arrivals, but some of whom had already been put through the mill, while others were still waiting. When we came in, except for some subdued groaning and sobbing, the place was still. Most of the eyes turned on us, and such eyes I had never seen before: red, feverish, weary eyes, full of pain—but these poor words hardly describe them.

The only person in the room not sitting or lying on the floor was a tall, thin middle-aged woman clad in a dark loose dress, a black kerchief tied below her chin, a gray shawl about her shoulders: palpably a proletarian woman. Her long arms akimbo, she leaned motionless against the white wall like an awful-beautiful statue. Her big feverish eyes, deep in the sockets of her hollow, green-pale face, spotted with blue and black marks, stared at us. The sight of her cut me to the quick. I burst into tears and nearly swooned with a feeling which I can't describe otherwise than religious. Even now, as I write, I can't think of her without feeling of grand, terrible pain in me. I remember at the time I thought of pictures I had seen in my childhood in a book about early Christian martyrs.

The gendarmes unshackled our hands and told us to make ourselves at home. Weak and hungry, I sank to the floor near the door, where a guard sat upon a stool. From a cell on the corridor came the loud groans of a peasant woman from Slavonia and a Belgrade writer who had been tortured the previous evening.

New prisoners, mostly young men, were brought into the *mansarda* every few hours.

I shook all day in anticipation of being cross-examined the first day, but I wasn't. At noon a couple of gendarmes brought a basket of bread and threw each of us a one-kilo loaf. When I asked for water, a gendarme handed me a filthy bottle, out of which everyone in the room had been drinking for months. This and the bread I ate made me nauseous for hours.

The tall woman with the black kerchief leaned against the wall all day long. She ate only a small chunk of bread, then handed her loaf to a man near her. I felt such reverence for her that, unable to express it, I couldn't endure looking at her.

And all the time—the loud groans from the corridor, the low groans and sighs of the people in the *mansarda*.

When it got dark, I thought for a while I would go crazy. An overwhelming vague fear possessed me. Then someone turned on the electric light, a single bulb in the center of the room, and I felt better. Only my face, my groin, my whole body hurt horribly. I wanted to talk to S—, the boy next to me who was also from my town and a friend of mine, but couldn't. My mouth and throat were too sore from yesterday. S— couldn't say anything, either. We merely looked at one another once in a while. He had been brought here with the same purpose as I: to give information about X.

It was late winter and gradually it became very cold in the room. There is steam-heat in the building, but after most of the offices below close, it is turned off. My thin overcoat was of no avail. My teeth chattered audibly and I shook all over; which, one muscle jerking and tugging against the other, enhanced every ache in my body. Now and then I said to myself, "I can't stand this much longer"—but the next few days taught me that, short of deadly wounds, there is almost no limit to what a human organism, even as meager as mine, can endure.

It must have been still early in the night when Kosmayats entered the *mansarda*. The light was too poor for me to see him clearly, or anyone else for that matter, but his voice was unmistakable. He asked someone if his name was So-and-So. Then, "*Ajde!*—come on!"

To whom was he talking? I waited, shaking with cold, fear and horror. Would I be next? I can't describe my thoughts and feelings. At times I couldn't breathe. I merely gasped. I clutched my hands, but couldn't feel them. There were short periods of almost total numbness. I heard only a dull sound:

the chattering of my teeth. I was sick in my stomach. Then I imagined what they were doing to the man or boy or woman in the torture-room, possibly the tall woman in dark who had stood against the wall in the daytime, and I came to again.

At long last they brought him back. I knew it was a man by the sound of his groans and cries. I don't know who he was; he had come to the *Glavnyacha* before us. They dropped him on the floor a good distance from me where he continued to groan and wail.

Kosmayats hadn't come in. There were two other men, in civilian clothes, coatless, their sleeves rolled up: like a couple of executioner's assistants. I saw them in the dim light as they walked across the room. They paused. One asked the other, "Which one does he want now, do you know?"—"I think so."... They turned in my direction and instantly I was all instinct. I sat up rigid, holding my breath, my heart pounding irregularly. I was ready to kick, strike, bite, scratch, and yell. They came to me and one asked me what my name was. I couldn't open my mouth. He kicked and asked me again,—"No; not him," said the other. "This one here. Is your name S—?"

"Yes," said S—.

"*Ajde!*"

They led him out—my friend; I wanted to call to him—something: anything—but couldn't produce a sound. They were taking my friend! The door in the opposite end of the room closed... then I heard another door slam... then, again, all I could hear were the moans of the man they had just brought back and the groans and weeping of the peasant woman and the writer in the corridor cell... then, of a sudden, the sharp, hysterical cries of a girl further down the corridor who, I learned subsequently, was here because she had unwittingly helped her brother, a Communist, to distribute some Red Aid money. (Red Aid is the secret organization for the collection of money and its distribution among the families of those in prison or who were killed by government terrorists.) Two nights before they had beaten her for two hours on the soles of her feet and inflicted violence and indignities on her sex organ.

It was too awful to sit there, in semi-darkness, shivering, sick with pain, and, worst of all, listening to the groans, wails and hysterical cries, and imagining what they were doing to S—. From comrades who had preceded me to the *Glavnyacha* and come out alive, I had heard of all the tortures before. Maybe they were beating him on the soles of his feet or squeezing his testes with the special kind of pliers, or sticking pins behind his nails, or—I thought I would go mad again. I wished I would be next. It would be a relief. It was so much more awful to bear the suffering of other than one's own pains.

Hours—eternities—later they brought S— back. He sobbed and groaned. They placed him on his feet; he let out a terrific yell and fell on his face near me, which caused the coatless plainclothesmen to burst into malevolent laughter. They had beaten him on the soles of his feet for two hours.

When the torturers did not select me and left with another victim, I slid to S— and, unable to speak, took one of his hands into one of mine and put my other hand on his face. Around the mouth he was sticky with blood. Later I learned they had knocked out two of his teeth. He recognized me and, gripping my hand in both of his, began to wail in his agony. He said something to me I couldn't understand, then he repeated it several times till I gathered he hadn't told them anything. This nearly finished me. I burst into tears with a feeling, which I suppose was a mingling of love and compassion for S— and pride in our cause. It was a feeling, perhaps, not unakin in intensity and general quality to the religious feeling of "salvation," though at the same time, of course, quite different. There was no happiness in it, no ecstasy; only pain and horror and, if I may say so, heroism.

It was the worst night in my life. It would take a Dostoevski or a Gorki to come anywhere near describing all its aspects. In the ensuing days I saw even greater horrors, but they affected me less. I became used to them.

But my resistance to, my hate of, what was going on became stronger and stronger. I had fits of rage, which I could hardly contain in me. I spent hours imagining what tortures Kosmayats, Vuykovich, Stankovich, and these other agents whose

names I never learned, would have to be subjected to to avenge our suffering. I realized vengeance was a primitive emotion, but I could not help feeling it. I desired to witness, and participate in, the torture of King Alexander and all those about him and in his service; of the whole class, hundreds of thousands of people, for whose benefit he and they ruled and tortured us. Initially, in my nature, I believe I am not a cruel or vicious person. I know my father and mother, especially my mother, were the gentlest of people. But what I saw and experienced in the *Glavnyacha* gave rise in me to powerful sadistic cravings, and for moments I was in veritable delirium of hate for everybody from the King down to the lowest gendarme. My hate and desire for vengeance were elemental but, I think, not divorced from justice.

This night was the most important period of my life. Hitherto, in my thoughts and work as a Communist, although of proletarian origin, I had dealt largely with theories. Now I saw the unbridgeable chasm, the awful depth of class hate. Now I knew and felt what it was all about.

In the morning of my second day in the *Glavnyacha* new prisoners were brought in. Some, evidently, had already been beaten up; their faces were swollen, black and blue. Some, who had been kicked or whose testes had been squeezed, had difficulty in walking.

From among those in the cells, a dozen or so prisoners were taken out. I believe some were sent to trial before the Court for Safeguarding the State; others were transferred to the old *Glavnyacha*, which temporarily had more room than the new; still others were being released. A few evidently had not been tortured, or at least showed no marks of bad treatment. I didn't recognize any of them, as they were herded through the *mansarda*. Some doubtless were Communists; others, perhaps, milder revolutionaries or anti-regimists. Several wore excellent clothes, even fur coats. These latter showed the least sign of maltreatment.

Then they put some of us recent arrivals into cells along the corridors. Five others and I were shoved into a hole barely enough for us to sit down. In one corner of it were bundles of confiscated Communist literature which the gendarme on duty in our corridor permitted us to spread around so we could sit on them.

My four cellmates were all strangers to me. They had been in the *mansarda* for several days. Except for the preliminaries, they had not yet been tortured. Two had been in the *Glavnyacha* before: a worker from a mining district in Serbia, a Croat railroad man: both Communists. Of the other two, one was a Montenegrin student in Belgrade, also a Communist; the second one, a peasant from Voyvodina, politically an Agrarian.

Poor S— groaned and sobbed in the cell next to ours.

My cellmates talked. Finally, I regained my power of speech and told them who I was and wherefrom. But then, of a sudden, I became terribly sleepy and, sitting on my bundle of Communist literature against the wall, fell asleep.

When I woke up, hours later, the Serbian miner was writhing in pain on the floor. While I slept, they had come for him and tortured him. He merely writhed, not emitting a sound. Serbs can endure more than either Slovenes or Croats. They seldom "break" and talk. The miner's feet were swollen to twice their size, with large cracks in the soles. His mouth was bloody and blood oozed out of one of his ears....

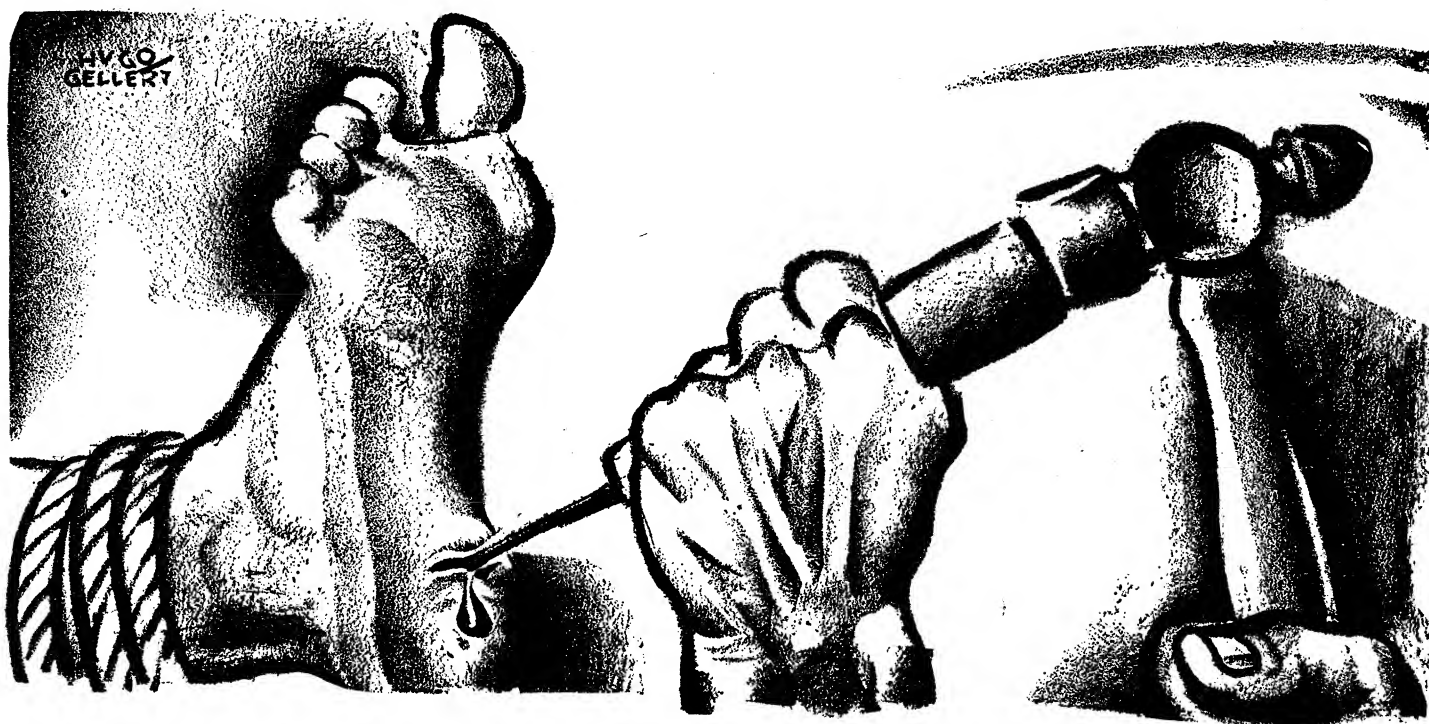
At noon—bread again, and the gendarme passed around the filthy bottle which he refilled from a faucet as soon as we emptied it.

The coatless men with rolled-up sleeves passed by our cells every few hours. Coming, they brought back a tortured body; going, they led out a new victim. Kosmayats was off in the daytime and another man was in charge of "cross-examinations."

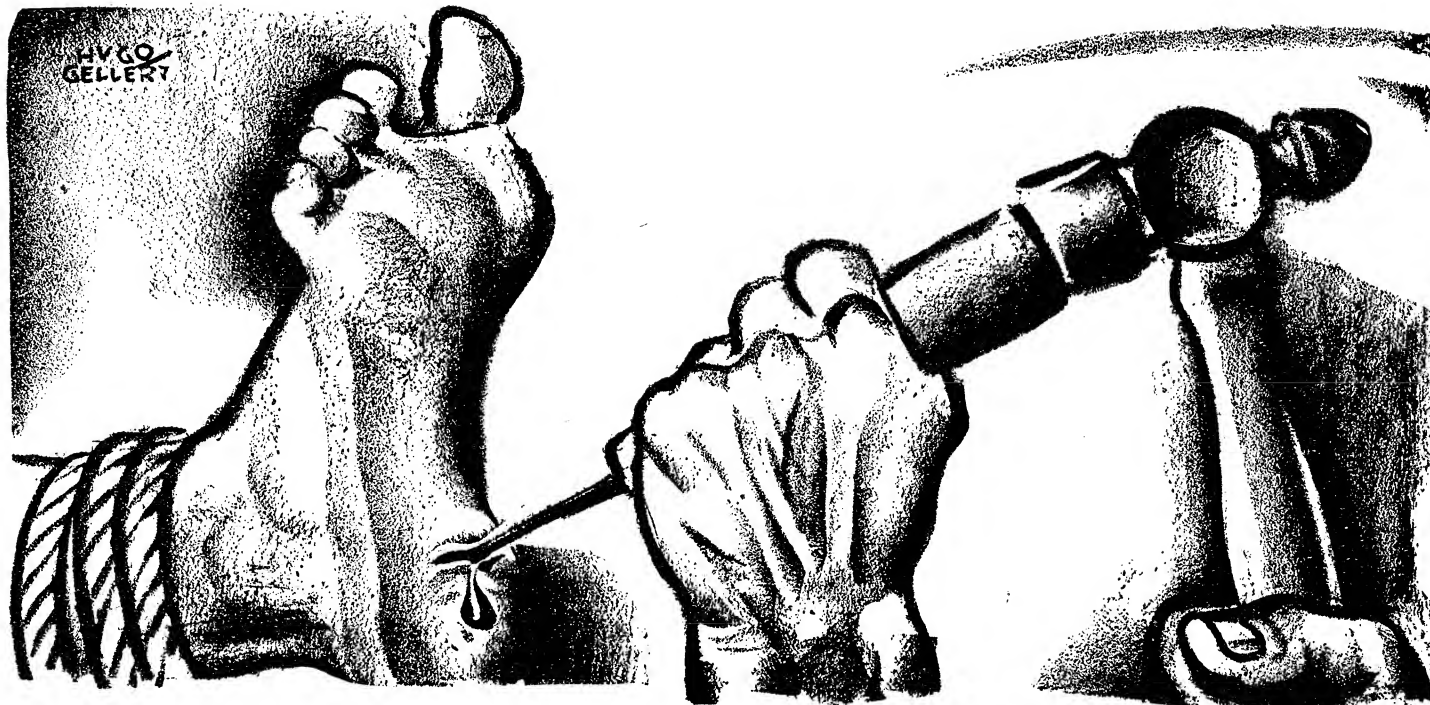
As I say, I had become considerably hardened to what I saw; but even so I wished they would take me next. However, I had to wait for days.

We talked. The Croat railroad man had been in the *Glavnyacha* with Bracanovich, and told us how the latter had died. I heard the story before. (I heard it from several other people, substantially the same as given below—L.A.)

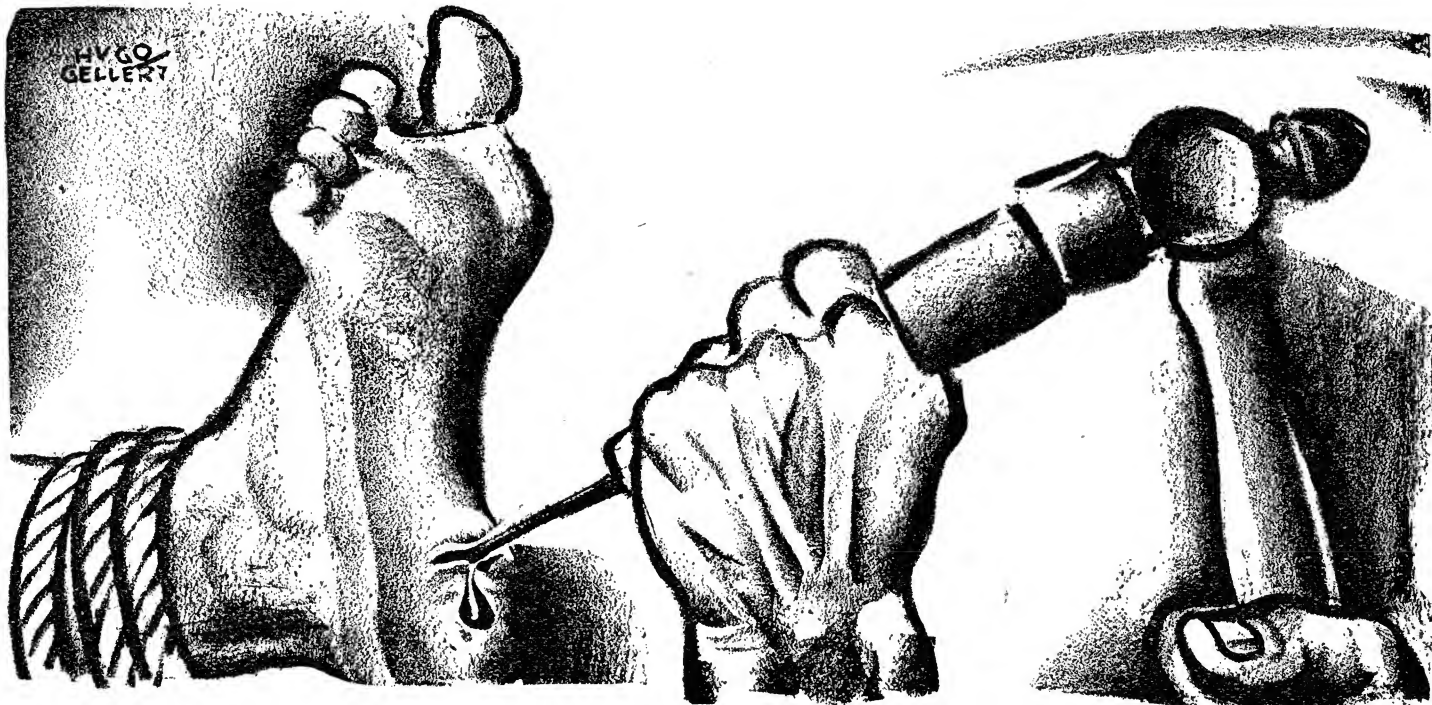
I believe no one in human history ever went through such tortures as Bracanovich. He was nearly seven feet tall and built in proportion: a veritable giant of a Serb. He burst the shackles on his wrists and the chains on his ankles, then for nearly an hour he tossed around the office sixteen secret agents and gendarmes. That they didn't kill him then was because they expected him to talk. He was guilty of the worst crimes. He was a member of the Comintern for the Balkans; had been to Russia; was a leader of the C. P. Y., etc.... Finally they succeeded in tying him up and kept him tied till the worst imaginable tortures didn't exhaust his superhuman strength. With sticks of hard rubber they pounded the soles of his feet into a bloody mess. They put live coals under his armpits and tied his arms close to the body till the coals became cold. They stuck needles under his nails. They crushed his testes. Finally they broke all the joints of his fingers. To all their questions he hurled colossal curses upon their heads, such as but a Serb can utter. He taunted them by laughing while they beat him, as well as while the coals sizzled under his armpits. He told them what would happen to them and their masters when the



HUGO GELLERT



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Balkans went Bolshevik. He never lost consciousness. They returned him to the cell and he lay on the floor, which was too short for his body, unable to move; but his mind was clear and he managed to tell his cellmates what had happened to him. When the cell was emptied of other prisoners, he called after them, "But tonight, I have a feeling darkness will engulf me!" His feeling was accurate. During the night shots were heard in the *Glavnyacha* and a few days later the papers printed an official communique that the archcriminal, Bracan Bracanovich, Stalin's personal agent in Yugoslavia, had been shot dead when he "attempted escape" from the *Glavnyacha*! ...Now every year on his grave red roses come to bloom....

Simultaneously with "Brac," there was in the *Glavnyacha* a Dalmatian sailor named Klemensich. For six days in succession they tortured him hours daily. He told nothing and retained consciousness till the sixth day, when they drove a long rusty awl into his heel—and three days later he died; whether of blood-poisoning or simply of pain, is unknown.

I heard again the story of Nesich, secretary of Red Aid, whom—after days of torture, during which they filed off one of his legs—they threw out of a fifth story window: whereupon it was officially stated he had jumped out, "a suicide."

Of such and similar cases there was no end of talk in our cell.

Late one afternoon they came for me. One of my cellmates whispered to me, "Don't let them get anything out of you!"

They took me to the office. There were Vuykovich and Stankovich. The former said to me, "Now take your choice: tell us where X is and what became of the stuff he brought in two weeks ago, or"—pointing at a long piece of hard rubber, two small sand-bags, and three thick pencils on the desk—"or we'll let you taste these. With the sand-bags, for instance, we can give your narrow, flat chest a massage you'll never forget." (Banging one on the chest with sand-bags causes intense internal pain and damage, without leaving a mark on the skin.) "This," lifting the rubber, "is one of the main articles of our constitution, while with these pencils we can break your fingers with neatness and dispatch." He talked in a lazy, casual voice. It was close to the end of his work-day and I suppose he was tired.

Then Stankovich suddenly yelled, "Talk!"—and I was on the floor, both he and Vuykovich on top of me, one beating me with the rubber on the head, the other kneeling on my abdomen.

"Talk! Where can we find X?"

I could not have said a word, had I wanted to.

Vuykovich rose, booted me in the face, then sat down to a typewriter and began to write something. Without looking up, he said to Stankovich, "Give it to the Communistic—!"

Stankovich sat on my stomach, lifted himself up, then came down on me again with his entire weight. This went on till I lost consciousness, and; for all I know, maybe afterwards. I passed blood for months later.

I believe I was unconscious only a few minutes. When I came to, I heard Stankovich curse a gendarme, who, it seemed, was a chauffeur and had just informed him that he could not have the official automobile that evening and take out his woman, because someone higher than he had decided to use it. "I—your mother; is there no other car he can use?" Then to another gendarme, "Take this Communistic—to his cell!" He appeared to have lost interest in me.

As the gendarme picked me up and began to drag me out, Vuykovich, still at the typewriter, looked up and said, "I'll see you tomorrow."

In the cell they asked me, "Did they torture you?"

I shook my head, for actually what they had done to me was not torture. The comrades, however, didn't believe me; I was nearly dead.

Next afternoon I was called again. Vuykovich was alone in the office. The man who brought me in he ordered out, then told me to sign a paper.

I said I don't want to sign anything.

"I've no time to fool with you!" he said in a hissing voice. "I've more important things to attend to." He walked to the window, opened it, and said: "Sign or jump!"

I shook my head.

He hit me twice in the face and brought his knee into my groin, which doubled me up.

"You sign, or, by your mother's—, I'll leave you here for Kosmayats—you know Kosmayats?—and he'll put you through the regular procedure. Don't try to screw me! You damned fool, you don't realize how lenient I am with you....Get up!" He pulled me up and hit me. "I give you three minutes to sign that, or Kosmayats for you! Or"—he flew into a rage, punching me again in the face—"I'll throw you out of the window myself!"

Barely able to keep from fainting, I read the typewritten statement, a confession that I had been caught with a quantity of Communist literature in my possession. Exerting all my power to think straight, I decided to sign. After all, by signing I did not incriminate anyone else. Then, too, I was so naive as to expect that when I declared in court that I had "confessed" under threat of torture, the state judge would dismiss the case. And so I signed.

I was kept in the *Glavnyacha* for two more months, till all the outer marks of maltreatment on my body vanished. There were numerous other prisoners whose status was approximately the same as mine. We occupied a row of cells apart from the newcomers. Twice a week a doctor came to look us over.

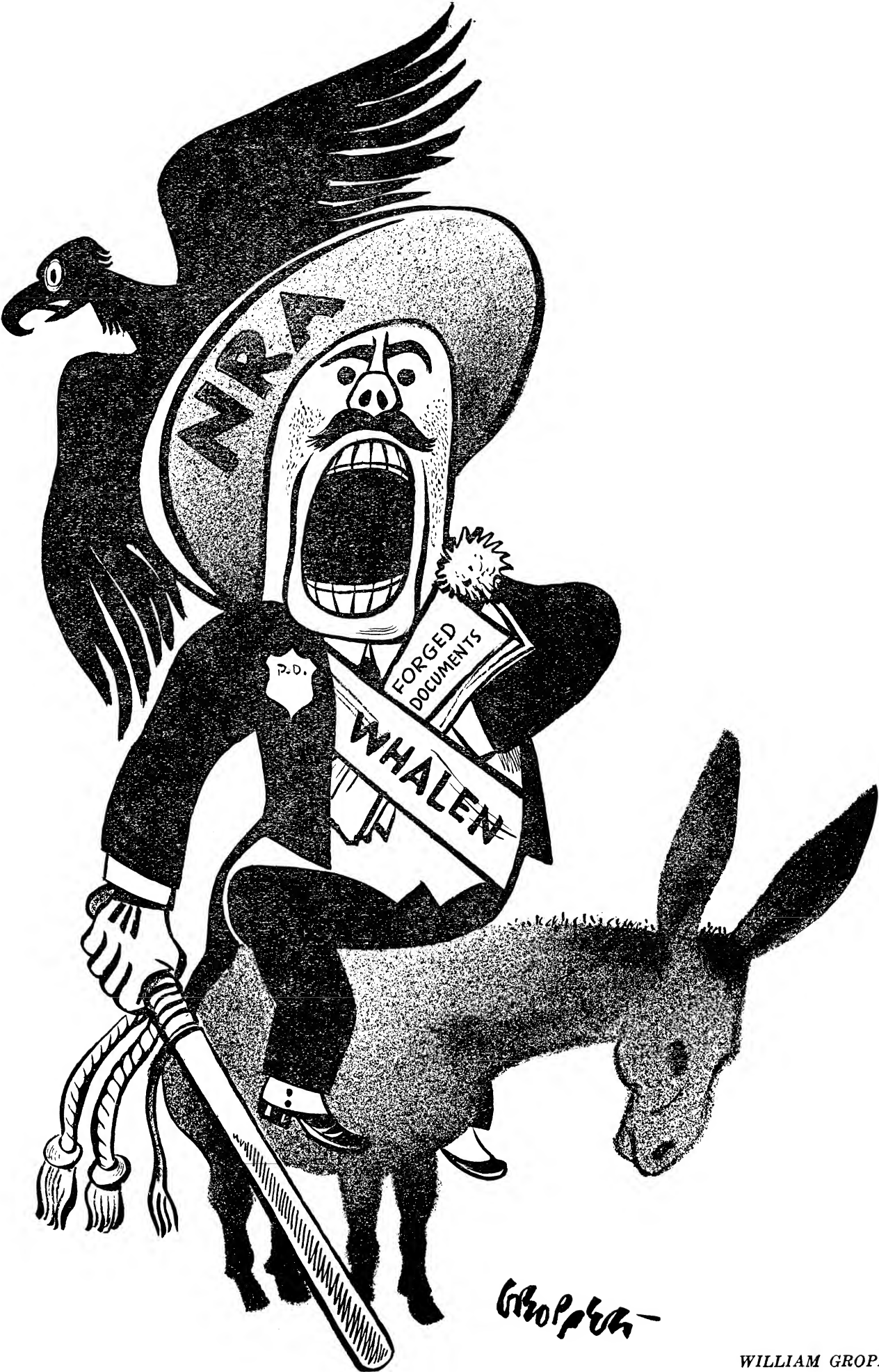
Slowly, slowly, I began to feel human again. At times I listened to tales of torture with a curious, detached interest. I heard one man tell how, in torturing him, Kosmayats had gagged him with a rag soaked in urine. I heard of cases where husbands were tortured in the presence of their wives, and vice versa, till one or the other, unable to endure the other's suffering, talked. I heard that occasionally, in torturing prisoners, Kosmayats & Co. played gramophone records by Sovka, a Belgrade soprano, or Chaliapin. I listened to stories about men and boys who cracked under torture and told everything they knew, more than they were asked, giving names of comrades, who a few days afterward were arrested; betraying the whereabouts of illegal printshops, etc. I heard of one man who could not stand the pain and began to yell, "Long live King Alexander!"—whereupon, roaring with laughter, they continued to beat him anyhow....But now and then I was half out of my mind. I cursed the weaklings who talked, though in my calm moments I knew they couldn't be blamed—not really. They weren't made to be good Communists in Yugoslavia under the reign of His Majesty, King Alexander Kara-georgevich. Momentarily I felt very proud of myself. Then Bracan Bracanovich occurred to me, and I became, within myself, a humble little fellow again. I believe I could have endured torture by Kosmayats the same as S—endured it; but who knows?

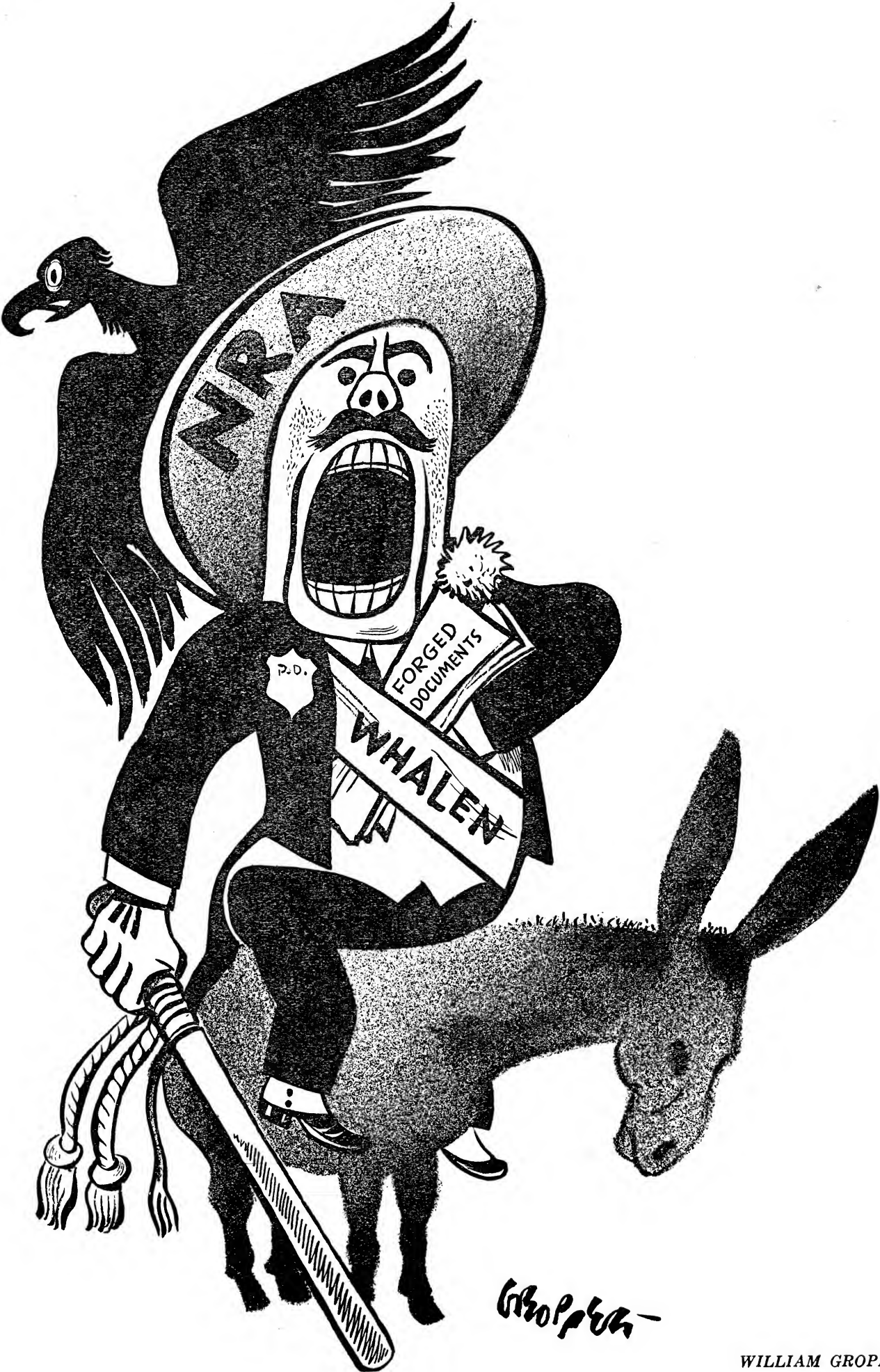
Then came the day of our trial. I was to be tried with a dozen or more other Communists who were charged with minor "crimes" against the state.

I felt intense ecstasy when they put us in the police-wagon which took us to the court-house. It was spring and the air was wonderful. Everyone else felt the same. We broke out singing the Internationale. The gendarmes let us sing; "only not so loud!" said one of them. Most of them, poor, disgusting creatures, are secretly not unsympathetic to Communism....

In court my insistence that I had signed my "confession" under threat of further torture was in vain. I was given a year and a half.

In the state penitentiary at— I found myself in a crowd of 243 political prisoners from all sections of Yugoslavia. Here I learned of methods in other *Glavnyachas*—in Zagheb, for instance, where torture of "politicals" was conducted under the personal supervision of the city chief of police (since removed from office, but not because he tortured people!). There they tied men's hands to hooks on the walls, so they could not sit down, and bricks on their testes. There a university student was kept awake for a week. If he closed his eyes, a secret agent struck him with a rubber club. There they tortured to death the revolutionaries Djakovich and Hecimovich. At Samobor, near Zagreb, in 1929, secret agents killed two Communists, Dresk and Misich, in their sleep. In Sarajevo, in the same year, they finished two Communists: a worker, Barun, and a tailor, Finzij. In the *Glavnyacha* at Osijek, Croatia, they hurled out of the window the butchered but still living body of the worker Hlavko. In Zagreb, again, worker Minderovich took poison and died while being beaten on the soles of his feet. But why go on?





A first hand account of the vast revolutionary organization, the fighting Groups of Five and the illegal press, now undermining the Hitler dictatorship—By arrangement with the London New Statesman and Nation.

The Revolution Lives And Grows in Germany

Ernst Henri

IS there still a Germany to-day apart from Hitler? It appears to be unthinkable. The news which comes from Germany daily speaks of a sudden transformation of an entire nation—of the end of all parties, of the disappearance of all non-National Socialist organizations and leaders, of the cessation of all non-Fascist thought. There is nothing outside Hitler. That is the truth, but it is only half the truth. The other half is the existence of a new subterranean revolutionary Germany.

There is perhaps no other example in history of a secret revolutionary movement with a completely equipped organization and an effective influence extending over the whole country, being able to develop in so short a time. Practically every one of the larger factories contains a secret revolutionary group; in almost every district in the larger towns illegal organizations and printing-presses are at work; almost every day in Berlin, Hamburg, Essen, Leipzig and other industrial cities, anti-Fascist handbills, leaflets and posters appear in the street, local strikes break out in all directions; and the feelers of this organization are manifestly stretching right into the cohorts of the Nazi Storm Troops. This entire movement has come into existence in within three or four months of Hitler's *coup d'état*. And it will be stronger than any of its forerunners. It has little of the romance of the old revolutionary movements, of the Russian anti-Tsarists, of the Spanish Republicans, of the Italian insurgents. It has nothing of the nationalist pathos or of the religious poeticism of the youngest of the world's revolutionary movements—of the Irish Free Staters, of the Indian Swarajists, of the Macedonian terrorists. Its characteristic is that of a sober minded, scientific organization of struggle and conspiracy and a military mass formation, which lays hold not of small individual groups, but of an entire social class. This organization, which socially and politically is not based only upon the thirteen million former Socialist and Communist electors in Germany, is to-day dogging Hitler's every footstep. In a few months time it may become more dangerous for him than all the old parliamentary opposition parties which he has hurled with such ease into the abyss.

The Groups of Five

Its core lies in the so-called *revolutionary groups of five*, a novel form of anti-Fascist organization, which, under Communist leadership, has taken the place of the former party unions and associations. These groups of five cover practically the whole of German industry; almost all the factories and the majority of the more important offices are honeycombed with them. Each group comprises approximately five persons, who as far as possible are employed in the same section, industrial and office workers, who formerly belonged to bodies of varied political complexions—to the Social Democratic Trade Unions, to the Reichsbanner, to the Christian Societies, to the Communist R.G.O. (Red Trade Union Opposition)—or even were

quite unorganized and politically indifferent. Together these persons form a small, compact, secret brotherhood.

Because each group of this kind is limited to just a few persons, it is almost invisible from outside and almost unseizable; how can one follow up and control conversations and meetings of four or five persons during a rest interval inside a factory, in a private house during a radio performance, or on an excursion into the woods on a Sunday. In the larger workshops there are dozens of such groups of five, which work independently of each other as far as possible and often are not mutually acquainted. Should a group be discovered and arrested (or ejected from the shop) the others carry on. But they are coordinated from above; the leadership and central direction of all the groups of five in a town or in a local industrial establishment are in the hands of a higher authority, of a narrower and more exclusive conspiratorial organization, the "sub-district committee," consisting of a few experienced revolutionaries. The contact between this local centre and the workshops is generally maintained by one individual, the revolutionary "workshop inspector," who holds the threads of all the groups of five in one single workshop.

Courage Revives

This works inspector has the most responsible and the most dangerous post in the entire anti-Fascist organization, for he knows both the staff in the workshops and the secret addresses of the local centres. The whole attention of the Hitler police, and of the factory management which the Nazis appoint, is mainly directed to the discovery of these people. But that only happens in the rarest cases, and the anti-Fascist fighting spirit is so strong in the German factories that reinforcements and substitutes are always to be found—frequently from the ranks of those who used not to be in the least interested in political affairs. The whole of this secret machinery, starting as it may seem to English readers, is in fact now the sole practical form in which the political thought and will of millions of men who have been reduced to silence in Hitler's "Totalitarian State" can realize itself. The purpose of the groups of five is to revolutionize whole workshops, whole groups of industrial and office workers, and to undermine the new economic organization of the Hitler State, which, like Mussolini's prototype, must be founded on the Fascist corporations of the workers, of the so-called "National Socialist Workshop Organization." (N.S.B.O.). The Nazis, who have suspended all Trade Unions and independent labor bodies, are endeavoring by means of coercion and propaganda to force all the workers into their N.S.B.O. organization, where under the command of Nazi leaders they will become the second line of the "Totalitarian State," of which the Storm Troops and the S.S. form the first line.

The groups of five flood the factories with anti-Fascist propaganda material which they receive from the local anti-Fascist centers. Even the Fascist newspapers in Germany have lately

mentioned this "pest" and have demanded "Draconian counter-measures." Revolutionary factory newspapers (little handwritten or typewritten sheets, which are published for a single workshop), handbills, leaflets, small paper strips with a few fighting slogans or bits of news are stuck up daily in the factories, pasted on the walls, on the machinery, in the lavatories, on the doors of the worker's home before he leaves in the morning. The whole fronts of houses in the working class areas are covered with revolutionary slogans in paint which is difficult to wash off. The Nazis have caught dozens of people, specially youths, at this job and have sent them to concentration camps or penitentiaries (the average punishment for such acts or for distributing revolutionary literature in connection with this has been raised during the past few weeks from six months to eighteen months imprisonment); but the walls of the houses and the fences still continue their protest against Hitlerism. In this way it has been possible to revive courage and give a fresh assurance to the masses of the workers who in the first days of the revolution and the terror seemed to be paralyzed by fright. But still more important is the other effect of the groups of five. The whole official Trade Union leadership in the factories, the settlement of wage rates, relationship with the employers and so on, are to-day in the hands of the National Socialist Workshop Organization (N.S.B.O.). In most cases the entire staff is simply forced to come into the N.S.B.O. by the summoning of a detachment of armed Storm Troops or by the threat of instant dismissal. But at the same time there enters the revolutionary group of five, which often immediately becomes the most active element inside the N.S.B.O. They begin "in the name of National Socialism" by urging the N.S.B.O. to put forward a demand for an increase of wages—for before his victory Hitler promised higher wages for all workers. They force the N.S.B.O. always, in the name and under the protection of the former Nazi program, to demand the fulfillment of the old demagogic promises, shorter working-hours, improved working conditions, and the removal of unpopular directors or officials. The result is that in the last few weeks the first wave of strikes since Hitler's victory has broken over Germany (though strikes are forbidden in the Hitler State), that in numerous cases the management in Nazi factories has been compelled officially to "postpone" the intended wage-reductions for two months, that the Nazi "Reichs Association of Industrial Employers" addressed a protest to the Chancellor against the attitude of the N.S.B.O. and that Hitler has come into conflict with a large number of his own local N.S.B.O. organizations, and indeed has been obliged to dissolve some of them for being "tainted with Marxism."

The Revolutionary Press

Though the groups of five form only part of the revolutionary movement in Nazi Germany, they are certainly the most important part—the mass basis of the movement. As a working class organization its main sphere of activity is in the factories and offices, where the real roots of any such movement must be. It is from this source that a future revolution against the Hitler Dictatorship must start.

There is to-day an extensive revolutionary press and a broad revolutionary agitation in Germany, which is uniting itself with the groups of five. If these latter represent the soldiers of the revolutionary movement, the mass reserves in the factories, one further step up the ladder we find the organization of the revolutionary officers, the staffs of the revolutionary movement in Germany. This is a much closer and more specialized organization, which is in the main identical with the old inner apparatus of the Communists—the only organization which has survived the establishment of the Third Reich of Hackenkreuzlers. We will refer later to the special role of the Communists. But the scope of the new revolutionary press in Germany, which is already distributing every day hundreds of thousands of papers, and which already represents a real power, has to-day grown far beyond the framework of that party. Around this and taking part in its distribution are gathering to-day thousands of former Social Democrats and Reichsbanner men, non-party people, Jews and even former Liberals and Catholics.

More important than the printing are the distribution and circulation of this press inside German towns which are swarming with armed and suspicious Storm Troops. For these

purposes a special art and science have been recreated to meet the new conditions. The streets, the underground railways, the restaurants, the parks, the unemployment exchanges are often full of this literature; it is in the hands of the passers by; it gets into private houses.

On June 24th the police discovered a large "astrological" business in Heinestrasse in Berlin, where 15,000 "horoscopes" were all ready for despatch—all revolutionary appeals. There are hundreds of methods of this sort, and the German revolutionaries invent new ones every day. A good deal of this literature is masked outside in the most careful manner. A few weeks ago a sixteen-page film advertisement, on *The Sign of the Cross*—a Cecil de Mille film—was widely circulated in Germany. The film really does exist, and the first few pages of the leaflet chatted amiably about Nero and ancient Rome, but then suddenly jumped to the burning of the Reichstag, and revealed Hitler, Göring and Goebbels as the real incendiaries.

They cannot kill the press of the people—this is proved once again in Nazi Germany. These leaflets are often technically very imperfect, even almost unreadable. But who worries about that at present in Germany? The same could be said of the leaflets of the French Revolution, of those issued by the fighters of 1848, and by the Russian revolutionaries: later on these became history.

Organizing Terror

The groups of five and the illegal press are the two chief weapons by which the revolutionary movement in Germany is forcing its way from underground to the surface of the totalitarian State and is undermining two of its pillars—the economic apparatus and the monopoly of public opinion. And perhaps the third and most important pillar of Hitler's dictatorship will also soon be undermined—its military apparatus. In many places in Germany inside the S.A., revolutionary organizations, "groups of revolutionary S.A. men," as they are called, have come into existence. Some of these even publish their own papers and distribute them in the barracks. (On June 10th, in Dusseldorf, an S.A. man of Standard 39 was shot for distributing such leaflets.) These groups begin to exploit the growing dissatisfaction of the S. A. men about their economic position, the luxurious life of their leaders, the non-fulfillment of earlier Socialist promises, the refusal to allow them to join the ordinary police, etc. It seems as if the growth of these secret S.A. organizations had had something to do with the great S.A. revolt which broke out in Germany at the end of June—the rebellion of the Frankfurt S.A., the dissolution of the famous Horst Wessel detachment in Berlin, and of some formations in Dresden, and the great street demonstrations of S.A. men in Bochum and Kassel, where they sang the *International*. This movement, which is just at the beginning, should not be exaggerated. But it is quite evident that in the long run the S.A.—this mass of 800,000 mercenary soldiers, partly recruited from the proletariat, cannot possibly be satisfied by Hitler and might become a new revolutionary explosive force. Hitler and Göring are already trying to protect themselves against it, by transferring police functions from the S.A. to the S.S. (Guard detachments), which are the much smaller and more devoted bodyguard of the Government. But this merely aggravates the uneasiness in the S.A.

Göring is trying to set up a terrifying organization against the growing spectre of the new revolutionary movement—the newly formed "Secret State police force" (Geheimes Staatspolizei-Amt, or the G.S.P.)—a grandiose spy and terror organization. It is to combine the old methods of the Russian Ochrana with the new experiences of the secret agency of Mussolini, and to form an unprecedented synthesis of police science. This organization, unlimited money and men at its disposal, has only one task—to catch revolutionaries. Its real spiritual inspirer is Goebbels, and its centre is the same secret circle of Nazi-terrorists who organized the Reichstag fire. This organization works day and night, its agents are spread throughout the country, and it works by torture of prisoners and suspects. But how far can the secret State police with all its spies, instruments of torture and vast organization succeed against the heroism, the courage and indomitable inventive genius of these people?

What indeed can any secret police do against a revolutionary movement springing from the people?

A Bughouse Fable

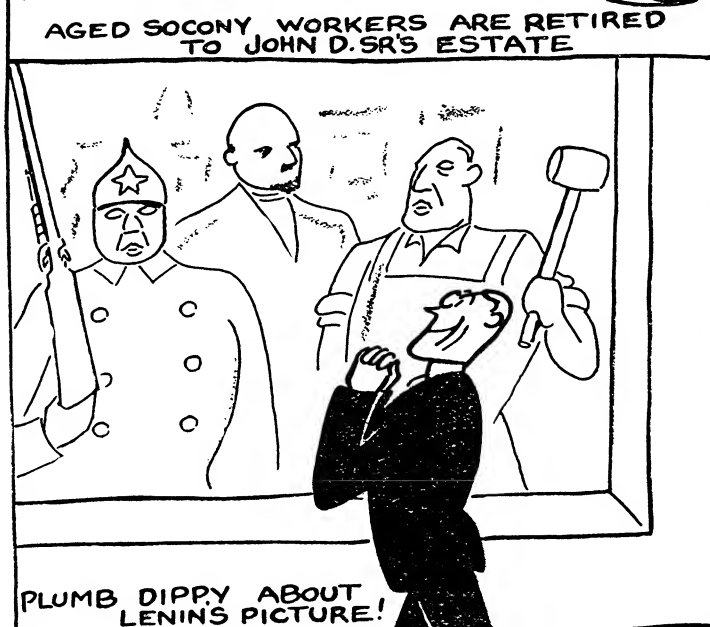
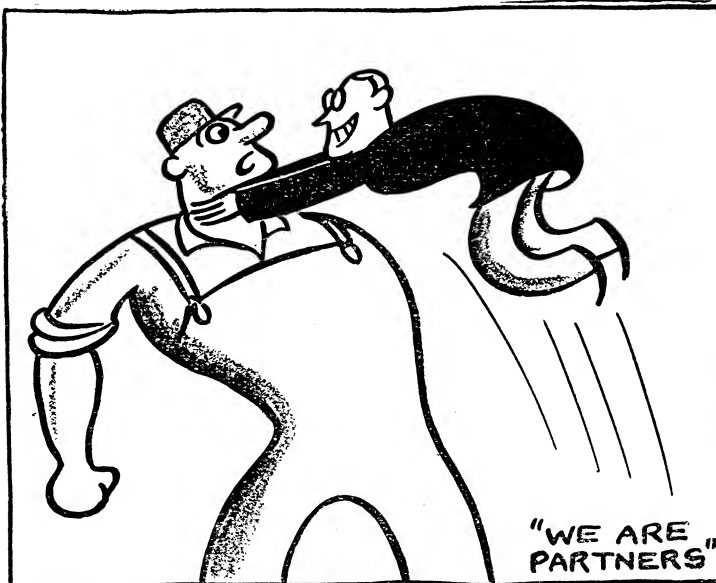
By OTTO SOGLOW

Max Eastman's

ON a par with Mr. Eastman's startling revelation about the Kharkov Conference of Revolutionary Writers are his laments over the "crude humiliation of arts and letters, the obsequious and almost obscene lowering of the standards of the creative mind" in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Read his opening paragraph in the August Modern Monthly:

"Diego Rivera's notion of the artist as supplying nourishment for the nervous system of the revolution is a mild one compared to the views about art which prevail in Soviet Russia. Nerve nourishment after all verges toward 'recreation', and might even let in 'beauty', unless the doors were carefully watched. (These were the two terms on Lenin's lips when he talked about art.) In Stalin's Russia no such loopholes are left open. Art is there viewed, managed and spoken of in the same terms as mechanical engineering or any kind of commodity production. The 'five-year plan in poetry', the 'Magnitostroy of art and literature', 'the literary hegemony of the proletariat', 'the seizure of power in the arts', 'poetic shock troops', 'collective' or 'collegiate creation?' 'the art-job', 'word-craft', the 'turning out of literary commodities', 'poetry as socially responsible labor', the 'creative duty to the socialist fatherland', the 'militant struggle for party-ism in the arts', 'the Bolshevik creative line'—for eight years the slogans have held the field in Russia without competition."

A modern reader familiar with Soviet psychology and not immune to the emotional appeal of Magnitostroy may not find anything very objectionable in such expressions as "Magnitostroy of Literature." He would most likely recognize it, not as a symptom of the "Taylorization" or "Fordization" of the arts, but as a refreshingly novel, typically Soviet figure of speech. Magnitostroy, to him, would convey the feeling of something grandiose, magnificent, imagination-stirring. As regards mechanical, engineering or industrial terms applied to literature, one need not go to the Soviet Union for illustrations. And what about "literary technique," "sentence structure," "construction or architecture of a novel," the "building" of a



Why does Eastman grieve for arts and letters in the Soviet Union; "Is it lack of information, obtuseness, or deliberate distortion?"

Hot Unnecessary Tears

Joshua Kunitz

character, the "polishing" of a piece of writing. Mr. Eastman himself has a chapter in his *Literary Mind* entitled "Division of Labor." And only today the writer of these lines heard an American publisher speak of "the literary market being glutted with such stuff." Urging Mr. Eastman's line of reasoning, a Soviet critic might turn round and declare that in America "art is viewed, managed and spoken of in the same terms as mechanical engineering or any kind of commodity production;" and he would come immeasurably closer to the truth about America than does Eastman to that about the Soviet Union.

It is not, we suspect, the mechanical or industrial content of the Soviet literary terms, but the newness of them, the revolutionary tinge of them that repels our aging critic. For Mr. Eastman is tired; Mr. Eastman is languid. He shrinks from the mere suggestion of "party-ism" in the arts. "Art is a weapon" is a slogan altogether too harsh and raucous for his worn, frazzled nerves. "Dialectical materialism" is an unmitigated bore. Mr. Eastman longs for "play," "humor." He sighs for "recreation," "beauty," and perhaps a little bit of love.

"Recreation," "beauty"—these, Mr. Eastman tells us, were the terms on Lenin's lips when he talked of art. And Mr. Eastman agrees with Lenin, and thus, by implication, pays homage to him. But Lenin, whose liberal æsthetic judgments Mr. Eastman reveres, is gone, and now, "in Stalin's Russia," weeps Mr. Eastman, "no such loopholes are left open." Too bad. Too bad.

There is, however, a somewhat ludicrous side to Mr. Eastman's grief. For if the truth must be divulged, it was Lenin, and not Stalin, who was the first to frankly demand "party-ism" in art; it was Lenin, and not Stalin, who first unqualifiedly enlisted art as a weapon in the class struggle. Had Mr. Eastman, before shedding needless tears, consulted volume IV of Lenin's *Collected Works* he would have come across the following incredible passage:

"The socialist proletariat"—Lenin wrote in 1905 "must establish the principle of party literature; it must develop this literature and realize it in actual life in the clearest and most concrete form . . . Down with

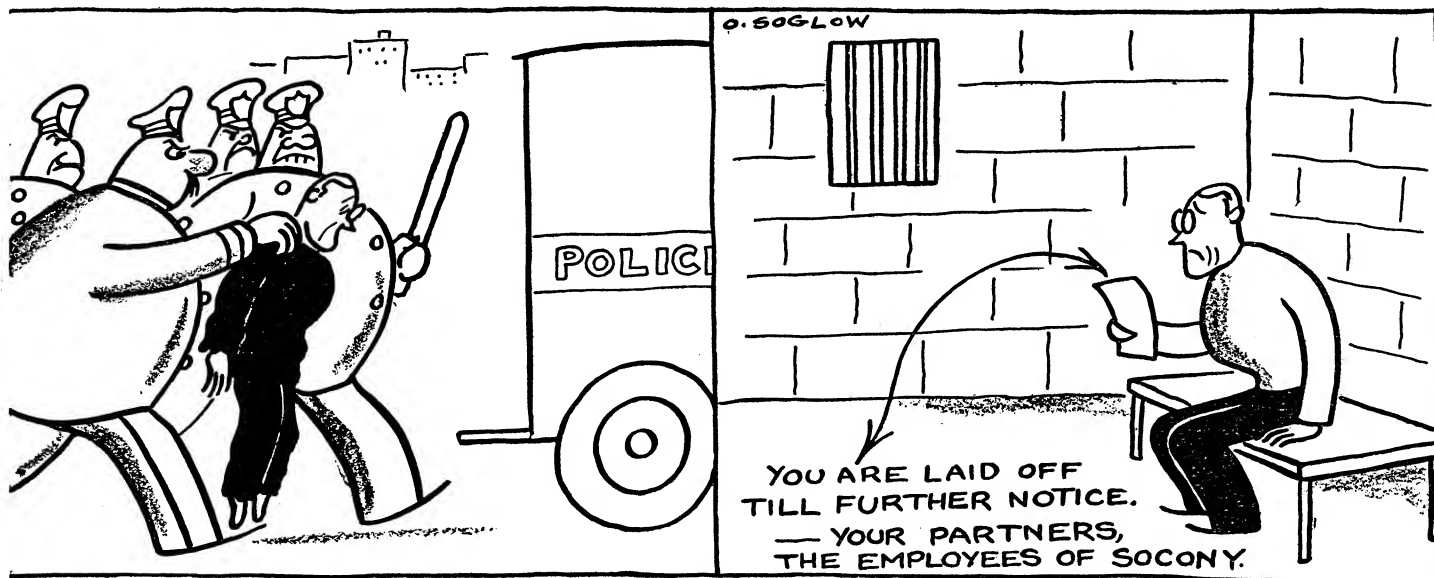
non-partisan writers! Down with the supermen-litterateurs! Literature must become a part of the general proletarian movement, a cog in that vast unified Socialist mechanism which is set in motion by the conscious advance guard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component part of the organized, planned, unified Socialist party work."

A piquant performance: To extol Lenin for everything one has read of him, and to blame Stalin for everything one hasn't. Not only does Mr. Eastman denounce Stalin for Lenin's thoughts (there is some justification for that: Stalin is the foremost follower and interpreter of Lenin), but, preposterously enough, he also denounces him for the thought or lack of thoughts of all kinds of Ivans and Stepan and Profans in the Soviet Union. Forsooth, Selvinsky (a poet!) said:

"Let's ponder and repair our nerves
And start up like any other factory;"

and Tretiakov (a litterateur!) said: "We assume that book production can be planned in advance like the production of textiles or steel." While I do not wish to say anything derogatory about either Tretiakov or Selvinsky, I cannot but wonder what has Stalin to do, what has the Communist Party to do, what has Illes or Auerbach or the *New Masses* or the John Read Club to do with their fanciful literary theories?

As it happens Tretiakov belonged to the Lefs a now defunct literary grouping; and Selvinsky belonged to the Constructivists, another now defunct literary grouping. Both the Lefs and the Constructivists were direct descendants of the Futurists and had their period of efflorescence long before the rise of Stalin. They were characteristic expressions of the NEP, of the bourgeois elements in the Nep. They groveled before American business, American efficiency, American technology. They attempted to transfer these concepts to art. Unable to fully orient themselves in the complex and ever changing Soviet reality, they attempted to simplify that reality for themselves by reducing to mechanics, technology, craft, mass production in the arts. To these scions of the bourgeoisie, psychology was worse than poison; for psychological writing would reveal their utter hollowness and lack of inner comprehension of the prole-



A Bughouse Fable

By OTTO SOGLOW

Max Eastman's

Hot Unnecessary Tears

Joshua Kunitz

ON a par with Mr. Eastman's startling revelation about the Kharkov Conference of Revolutionary Writers are his laments over the "crude humiliation of arts and letters, the obsequious and almost obscene lowering of the standards of the creative mind" in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. Read his opening paragraph in the August Modern Monthly:

"Diego Rivera's notion of the artist as supplying nourishment for the nervous system of the revolution is a mild one compared to the views about art which prevail in Soviet Russia. Nerve nourishment after all verges toward 'recreation', and might even let in 'beauty', unless the doors were carefully watched. (These were the two terms on Lenin's lips when he talked about art.) In Stalin's Russia no such loopholes are left open. Art is there viewed, managed and spoken of in the same terms as mechanical engineering or any kind of commodity production. The 'five-year plan in poetry', the 'Magnitostroy of art and literature', 'the literary hegemony of the proletariat', 'the seizure of power in the arts', 'poetic shock troops', 'collective' or 'collegiate creation?' 'the art-job', 'word-craft', the 'turning out of literary commodities', 'poetry as socially responsible labor', the 'creative duty to the socialist fatherland', the 'militant struggle for party-ism in the arts', 'the Bolshevik creative line'—for eight years the slogans have held the field in Russia without competition."

A modern reader familiar with Soviet psychology and not immune to the emotional appeal of Magnitostroy may not find anything very objectionable in such expressions as "Magnitostroy of Literature." He would most likely recognize it, not as a symptom of the "Taylorization" or "Fordization" of the arts, but as a refreshingly novel, typically Soviet figure of speech. Magnitostroy, to him, would convey the feeling of something grandiose, magnificent, imagination-stirring. As regards mechanical, engineering or industrial terms applied to literature, one need not go to the Soviet Union for illustrations. And what about "literary technique," "sentence structure," "construction or architecture of a novel," the "building" of a

character, the "polishing" of a piece of writing. Mr. Eastman himself has a chapter in his *Literary Mind* entitled "Division of Labor." And only today the writer of these lines heard an American publisher speak of "the literary market being glutted with such stuff." Urging Mr. Eastman's line of reasoning, a Soviet critic might turn round and declare that in America "art is viewed, managed and spoken of in the same terms as mechanical engineering or any kind of commodity production;" and he would come immeasurably closer to the truth about America than does Eastman to that about the Soviet Union.

It is not, we suspect, the mechanical or industrial content of the Soviet literary terms, but the newness of them, the revolutionary tinge of them that repels our aging critic. For Mr. Eastman is tired; Mr. Eastman is languid. He shrinks from the mere suggestion of "party-ism" in the arts. "Art is a weapon" is a slogan altogether too harsh and raucous for his worn, frazzled nerves. "Dialectical materialism" is an unmitigated bore. Mr. Eastman longs for "play," "humor." He sighs for "recreation," "beauty," and perhaps a little bit of love.

"Recreation," "beauty"—these, Mr. Eastman tells us, were the terms on Lenin's lips when he talked of art. And Mr. Eastman agrees with Lenin, and thus, by implication, pays homage to him. But Lenin, whose liberal æsthetic judgments Mr. Eastman reveres, is gone, and now, "in Stalin's Russia," weeps Mr. Eastman, "no such loopholes are left open." Too bad. Too bad.

There is, however, a somewhat ludicrous side to Mr. Eastman's grief. For if the truth must be divulged, it was Lenin, and not Stalin, who was the first to frankly demand "party-ism" in art; it was Lenin, and not Stalin, who first unqualifiedly enlisted art as a weapon in the class struggle. Had Mr. Eastman, before shedding needless tears, consulted volume IV of Lenin's *Collected Works* he would have come across the following incredible passage:

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Why does Eastman grieve for arts and letters in the Soviet Union; "Is it lack of information, obtuseness, or deliberate distortion?"

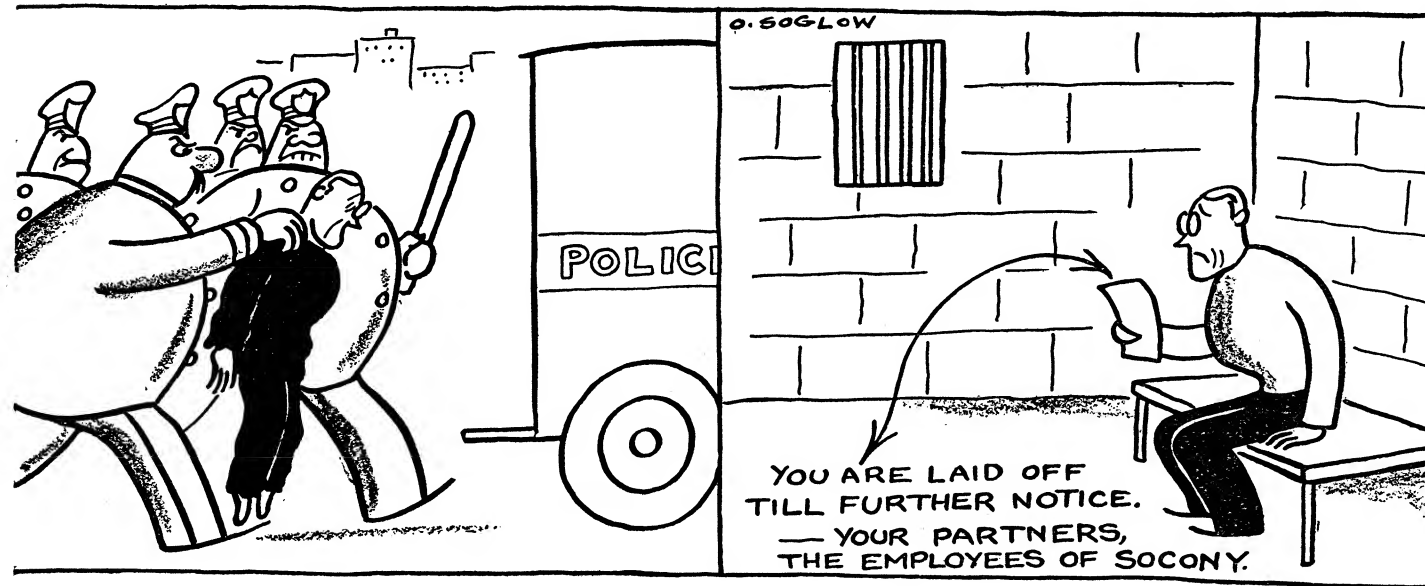
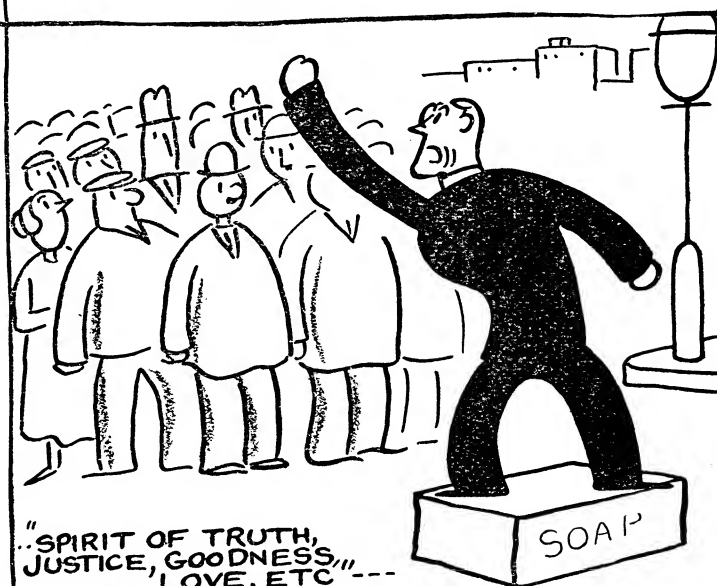
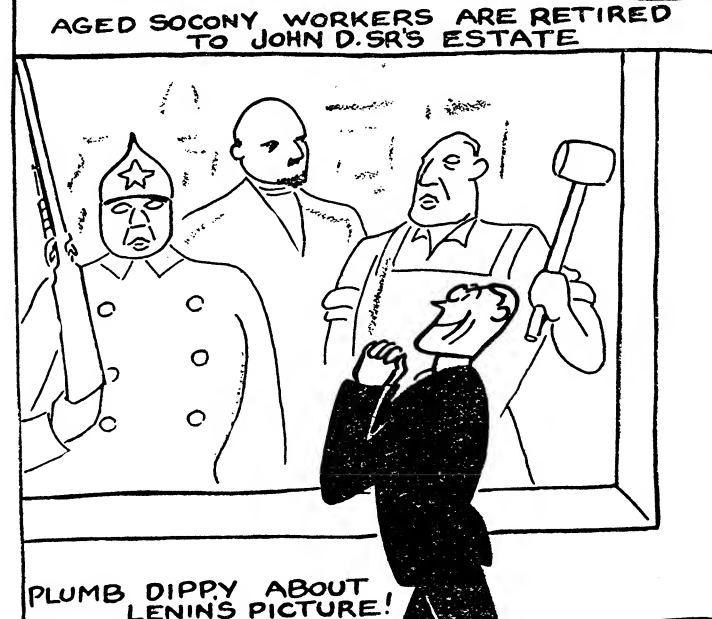
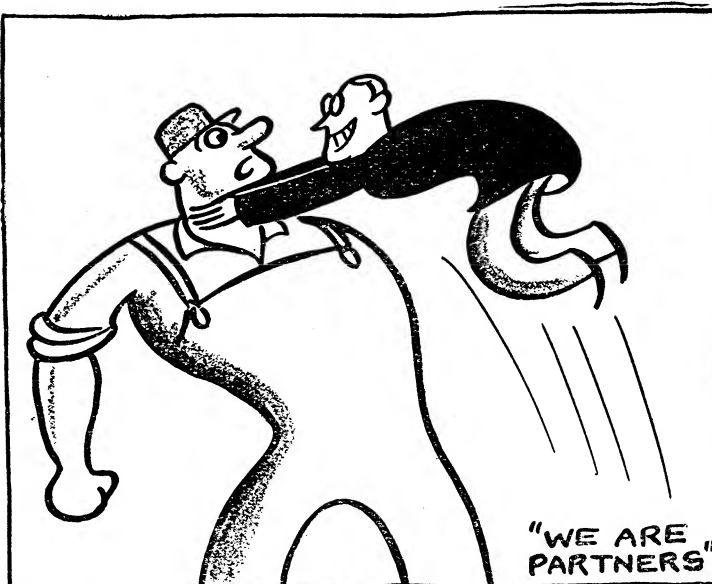
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tarian world about them. Both the *Lefs* and the *Constructivists*, though loudly proclaiming their revolutionism, had not a Communist amongst them, not a worker amongst them. The literary groupings that had Communists, had workers, and were close to the Party, regarded Lefism and Constructivism as bourgeois anathema, and fought it tooth and nail. This being the case, it seems incomprehensible why Mr. Eastman insists on placing at the door of Stalin, the Politbureau, Auerbach, etc. the literary fantasies of a Tretiakov or a Selvinsky.

On the contrary, the whole struggle on the literary front in the Soviet Union has been waged against the attempts to "Fordize and Taylorize" art by those who found simplification easier than the tackling of the kaleidoscopic, rapidly changing, bewilderingly complex Soviet reality. To call a work of art schematic was enough to damn it. To say of an author that he treated his heroes mechanically was to brand him as a cheap vulgarizer. "Zhivoy Chelovek"—"Living Man"—was a literary slogan around which many a bitter battle was fought. And Fadeev, one of the foremost novelists in the Soviet Union, a Communist and the editor of the leading Literary monthly *Krania Nov*, proclaimed Leo Tolstoy as his master.

The Kharkov Conference, suggests Mr. Eastman, is merely a reflection of what is taking place in Soviet letters generally—a distressing picture of "sacerdotal bigotry on the one side and sacrosanctimonious prostration to the priesthood, the repositories of the sacred dogma—sacred just so long as it is backed up by the secular, armed and priest-employing power—on the other." Yet a mere perusal of the twenty or so novels translated into the English language—novels ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left, from Ilf and Petrov's *Little Golden Calf* and Kataiev's *Embezzlers* to Gladkov's *Cement* and Panferov's *Bruski*, should have been sufficient to induce greater caution in a conscientious commentator. But, undeterred, Mr. Eastman, who prefers to remain disconsolate with respect to Soviet literature, plunges into melancholy ruminations over "sacred dogmas," "sacerdotal bigotry," and the "obsequious and almost obscene lowering of the standards of the creative mind" in the U.S.S.R.

The Masses Lead

Altogether, to weep over the "crude humiliation of arts and letters" in a country where playhouses, concert halls, museums, and art schools, despite their unprecedented growth, are always filled to their utmost capacity, where tickets to the Moscow Art Theatre are sold out a year in advance, and where moving pictures of the quality of *The Road To Life*, *Shame*, *26 Commissars*, and *Deserter* are produced in increasing numbers is, to express it mildly, unmitigated nonsense. To shed crocodile tears over the crude humiliation of letters in a country where more significant novels, poems, plays, and children's books are being published than in any other country in the world, and where editions, however large, are swallowed up overnight, is worse than nonsense. Seeing such absurdities in cold print, while one's memory is still filled with living images of workers, in the midst of the supreme exertions and endemic shortages of the *Five Year Plan*, assembled in large meetings to discuss novels, plays, poems, movies; of peasants in the Urals formulating in writing for the State Publishing House their reactions to books and pictures; of Red Army men at a literary gathering making tumultuous ovations for poets and prose-writers and calling out dozens of favorite stories and verses which they want the guests to read, is, frankly speaking, a bit shocking. One wonders: is this lack of information, obtuseness, or deliberate distortion?

One need not be an "obedient doggy . . . lapping up every word dropped from the lips of any Russian Bolshevik" to realize the tenuousness of Mr. Eastman's intellectual criteria when he says (in the sixteenth year of proletarian dictatorship!) that "Soviet Russia, notwithstanding her successful revolution, is behind the intellectual standards of other countries." By other countries Mr. Eastman, we take it, means Hitler's Germany and Washington-Merry-Go-Round America. The truth is, there is no other country in the contemporary world where the arts are so vital, so earnest, where the creative artist,

even the beginner, enjoys such prestige and economic security as in the Soviet Union. The "priesthood," the "repositories of the sacred dogma" of the arts in the Soviet Union are the readers. The qualities which the Soviet masses and critics expect from their creative artists and writers and which the latter are striving with varying degrees of success to achieve are artistic verisimilitude, social awareness, revolutionary dynamism.

In the ceaseless give and take between life and art, the Soviet artists and writers have been contributing to the intellectual and esthetic development of the masses and the masses to the vitality and earnestness of the arts.

During their brief stay in the U.S.S.R., the American delegates to the Kharkov conference had one unforgettable moment of vitalizing contact with the Soviet proletariat, when the Dnieprostroy workers, after listening to the revolutionary speeches of various foreign delegates respectfully informed the guests, through two workers' representatives, that their speeches were not satisfactory. "We thought," declared the workers, "that as artists, you would give us vivid pictures, artistic descriptions of how the workers live and struggle in your countries. Revolutionary phrases we can deliver ourselves. We have been thirteen years in the revolution. We are telling this simply because we know that the other workers whom you are likely to address during your stay in the U.S.S.R. will feel similarly. We have outgrown vague phrases. We want facts, and from artists, artistic presentation of such facts."

Such is the "sacred dogma" of Soviet art: *We want facts, and from artists, artistic presentation of such facts.* At a factory club in Moscow, the writer of these lines once had the instructive experience of hearing a large assembly of workers tell a prominent Soviet writer, Urii Libedinsky, that the life story of one of their colleagues, a shock-brigader, as written up by the novelist was not nearly so interesting and moving as the story told at that meeting by the worker protagonist himself. In other words, the workers criticized the author for inadequate artistic treatment of facts. On the other hand, as an expression of their appreciation of a book of sketches describing kolkhoz "Beacon" the peasant members of that kolkhoz sent in to the State Publishing House 187 individual orders for that book.

The extent of mass interest in the arts is clearly reflected in the Soviet daily press. Now it is a demand from a village that Dreiser's *American Tragedy* be printed in a large popular edition, now it is a demand for more Russian translations of the literatures of the minority peoples, now it is the spoofing of a futurist horse drawn on the cover of a booklet dealing with domestic animals ("How can we believe the contents of your book, when you don't even know what a horse looks like.") I have before me the last number (August 11, 1933) of the *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, the official organ of the Union of Soviet Writers. Almost two complete columns are devoted to suggestions of topics sent in by various worker-correspondents. T. Baturkina, a worker of a stocking factory, writes: "Give us a portrait of the Soviet woman. Of the woman who is in the vanguard. Show her as she is, in her family relations, with her new psychology, demands, aspirations. Show her as a mother. We expect from our writers the portrait of woman as producer, social being, mother." Comrade Smolianinov suggests Bobriki as "an exceptionally rich and thankful field for the study of the new processes that are taking place in the working class." Bobriki, a new industrial city with a population of 40,000, has been neglected by the creative writers, complains the worker correspondent. The writers Alexeev, Dementiev, and Demidov have done something, but not enough. "Bobriki," concludes Smolianinov, "should serve as an important object for depiction in a number of literary works, as well as a place for the development of new poets, writers, dramatists from the ranks of the working class, new masters of culture." The other letters are all in the same vein. Even the builders of the Moscow subway feel that their work and their lives have been too much neglected by the creators of literature. The Soviet workers want to see themselves, their heroes, their achievements reflected in their literature. The "Fordization" and "Taylorization" of the arts, moans Mr. Eastman.

Mr. Eastman is also incorrect when he categorically declares that "there are probably not six creative artists in the world who know what dialectical materialism is, and certainly not one who knows what the dialectic method of artistic creation is." There is nothing esoteric about dialectical materialism. Courses in it are given in every university in the Soviet Union. Countless books have been written on the subject, some of which have also appeared in this country. Nor is the dialectic method of artistic creation new. Merzhkovsky has been using the Hegelian dialectic for over thirty years. If Mr. Eastman compares Merzhkovsky's famous *Christ and Anti-Christ* trilogy, (*Julian the Opostate*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Peter and Alexis*) with Urii Lebedinsky's *The Birth of a Hero* he will see both the Hegelian and Marxian dialectics applied in fiction. He will also see that both are aesthetically unsatisfactory, both are schematic, and that in both the Hegelian triad, instead of serving as a vital key to a fluid, multicolored, and infinitely complex reality, becomes a dead formula which every character and every situation in the novels are designed to illustrate.

It is quite possible that the fault is not with the dialectic method but with the inadequacy of the authors. Mr. Eastman pays high tribute to "that full rich human sensing of a total situation which was Lenin's magic gift." A careful analysis of Lenin's works would convince Mr. Eastman that this magic gift of Lenin's consisted largely of a masterly use of the dialectical materialistic method. But if in philosophy, in history, in politics, it took great geniuses like Hegel, Marx, Lenin to make potent use of the dialectic method, it is scarcely fair to expect a Merzhkovsky, or a Lebedinsky, or a Fadeev, or a Kirshov, all definitely of the second rank when compared with the giants, to achieve something commensurate in the realm of literature. This explains why these men, in literature, like "Trotsky," in politics, "substitute the logical deductions from an intellectual *schema* for that full rich human sensing of a total situation" implied in the method of dialectical materialism.

The RAPP

However, whether the "dialectical method of artistic creation" is good or bad, whether the revolutionary writers know or do not know what it is, one thing is certain, this method has never to my knowledge been imposed on any creative artist. In my article, in the August issue of the *New Masses*, I showed that at the Kharkov conference there was no regimentation of American writers into any dialectical goosetep. More than this, in the "Holy Land" itself, despite the diabolical presence of Stalin, his college of Cardinals, his High Priests, and Drill Sergeants, dialectical materialism as a creative method was promulgated only by the R.A.P.W., or rather by the *Na Literatura* group, which was the most influential section of the R.A.P.P. But the R.A.P.P. was not the only organization of writers: there was the Pereval, there was the Kuznitsa, there was the association of peasant writers, there were a number of other organizations. Most of the writers in the Soviet Union belonged to no literary groupings, they were simply members of the Federation of writers a trade union organization, membership in which entitled them to food cards, rooms, medical attention, and all other services and guarantees provided by ordinary labor unions. Among the hundreds of prominent writers who did not belong to the R.A.P.P. and who did not accept dialectical materialism as their creative method were: Pilniak, Alexey Tolstoy, Lidin, Romanov, Tinanov, Andrey Biely, Babel, Gladkov (Communist), Valentin Kataiev, Ivan Kataiev (Communist), Tretiakov, Selvinsky, Shklovsky, Kirilov, Bezymensky (Communist), Leonov, Shaginian, Vishnevsky (Communist, with Order of Lenin), Ognov, Ilya Ehrenburg, Gastev, Seifullina, Liashko, Nikifrov, Semenov, Fedin, Shishkov, Zoshchenko, Ilf, and Petrov, Flaronov, Vsevolod Ivanov the great poet Pasternak, Antokolsky, Asseev, and hosts of others. The prominent Russian writers who belonged to the R.A.P.P. and avowed dialectical materialism as their literary method could be counted on the fingers of one hand Lebedinsky, Fadeev, Kirshon, and for some time Proferov.

Just as untrue as Mr. Eastman's assertions about the regimentation of all art in the Soviet Union under the dialectical materialistic banner are his asseverations that dialectical materialism has been summarily dethroned and "Socialist realism" and "red romanticism" put in its stead. Such a formulation is of course nonsensical, for Socialist realism is nothing but the

literary equivalent of dialectical materialism. There is no contradiction, and there has been no dethroning. A writer permeated with the dialectical materialist philosophy, that is with the philosophy of Marx and Lenin, is bound to be a socialist realist, i.e. is bound to see in present reality not only the vestiges of the receding past but also the germs of the emerging society. Nor, if he is a real Marxist-Leninist, is he likely to be coldly objective about the emergent socialist elements in the Soviet Union today. He may exult in it, he may be impassioned about it, and he may even anticipate the classless society in his work. He may be romantic in the sense that the Five Year Plan is romantic, that the conquest of the Soviet north is romantic, that the building of Magnitostroy is romantic. He may see in the present leaders, heroes, shock-brigaders, suggestions of the future man, of the man in communist society, and inspired, may choose to paint him in glowing colors. All this is not a negation or a nullification of dialectical materialism, it is merely an attempt, in Mr. Eastman's own phrase to counteract the R.A.P.P.'s substituting of "logical deduction from an intellectual *schema*" for full rich human sensing and artistic presentation of a total situation, which is dialectical materialism.

Who Is Quoted?

In his book of essays entitled *The Literary Mind*, Mr. Eastman expounds the pale, escapist, art-for-art's-sake esthetic typical of the tired petty-bourgeois radical who stands bewildered amidst the deafening clashes of two opposing worlds. By erecting a fictitious contradiction between art and science and insisting that it is the advance of science into fields heretofore occupied by literary eloquence rather than machinery, The World War, or the break-down of capitalism that is responsible for the woes of the arts in the capitalist world, Mr. Eastman very characteristically rationalizes a subconscious, class-conditioned evasion of the real problem. His article in the *Modern Monthly* reveals the underlying motive of his aesthetic. This is succinctly expressed in an alleged remark of John Reed's "made on the north-west corner of Greenwich Avenue and Tenth Street: 'This class struggle plays hell with your poetry.'" We do not know about John Reed—the topographical evidence adduced by Mr. Eastman makes us a bit skeptical as to the authenticity of the quotation—but that that quotation fully expresses Mr. Eastman's sentiments there can be little doubt. Since the class struggle plays hell with your arts, to hell with the class struggle and long live the arts! No wonder Mr. Eastman speaks so feelingly about the obscene lowering of the standards of the creative mind in the Soviet Union. According to him, it appears, the creative mind should function in the purity of an absolute social vacuum.

As a contrast to Mr. Eastman's escapist aesthetic I should like to reproduce the comments of a group of North Caucasian peasants who deprecated a playlet (*agitka*), produced by a troupe of young actors from Rostov-on-Don, on the ground that it was wanting in verisimilitude and psychological subtlety. "To show us a Kulak with a big belly, heavy gold chain, and loud bossy voice," argued one peasant, "is not to show us the enemy as he actually behaves nowadays. To recognize such a Kulak is easy, and we don't need the play for that. These days, a Kulak, even if he had a belly, would make every effort to pull it in, if he had a gold chain, he would take care to hide it, and his voice he would try to make as soft and sweet as possible. He would try to get into the kholhoz, and bore from within. This is the enemy, and this is the way he is to be shown. By simplifying the problem, you are disarming us, you are putting us off our guard."—And it seems to me that this Russian peasant, for all his "primitive equipment and naive habit of mind," reached out toward a philosophy of art infinitely more virile, exacting, and fruitful, particularly in a period of gigantic revolutionary struggle, than that promulgated by Mr. Eastman in his highly sophisticated and polished *The Literary Mind*. Mr. Eastman endeavors to deracinate art, to defach it from the basic all-pervading struggles of life and thus ultimately to deprive the revolution of one of its powerful weapons. The Soviet peasant-worker, a Bolshevik, wants to bring art close to earth and earth's struggle, and to pour into it the spirit, the energy, the rhythms of a fresh, throbbing class, struggling for the final emancipation of itself and all humanity.

The Strange Case Of Cuba

Manuel Gomez

Historical science, for the liberals, is summed up in what I like to call the Innocent Interpretation of History. If we are to believe these gentlemen, there is no pattern to historical events except an accidental one. There is no such thing as continuity of foreign policy, there is no conscious foreign policy at all, and wars are the result of psychological factors or well-intentioned diplomatic blunders rather than basic clashes of interests—save perhaps wars of the more or less distant past. Living along from event to event in the spirit of the Innocent Interpretation, your liberal is bound to find himself suddenly face to face with an occurrence which knocks the pins completely from under the equilibrium of his ideas.

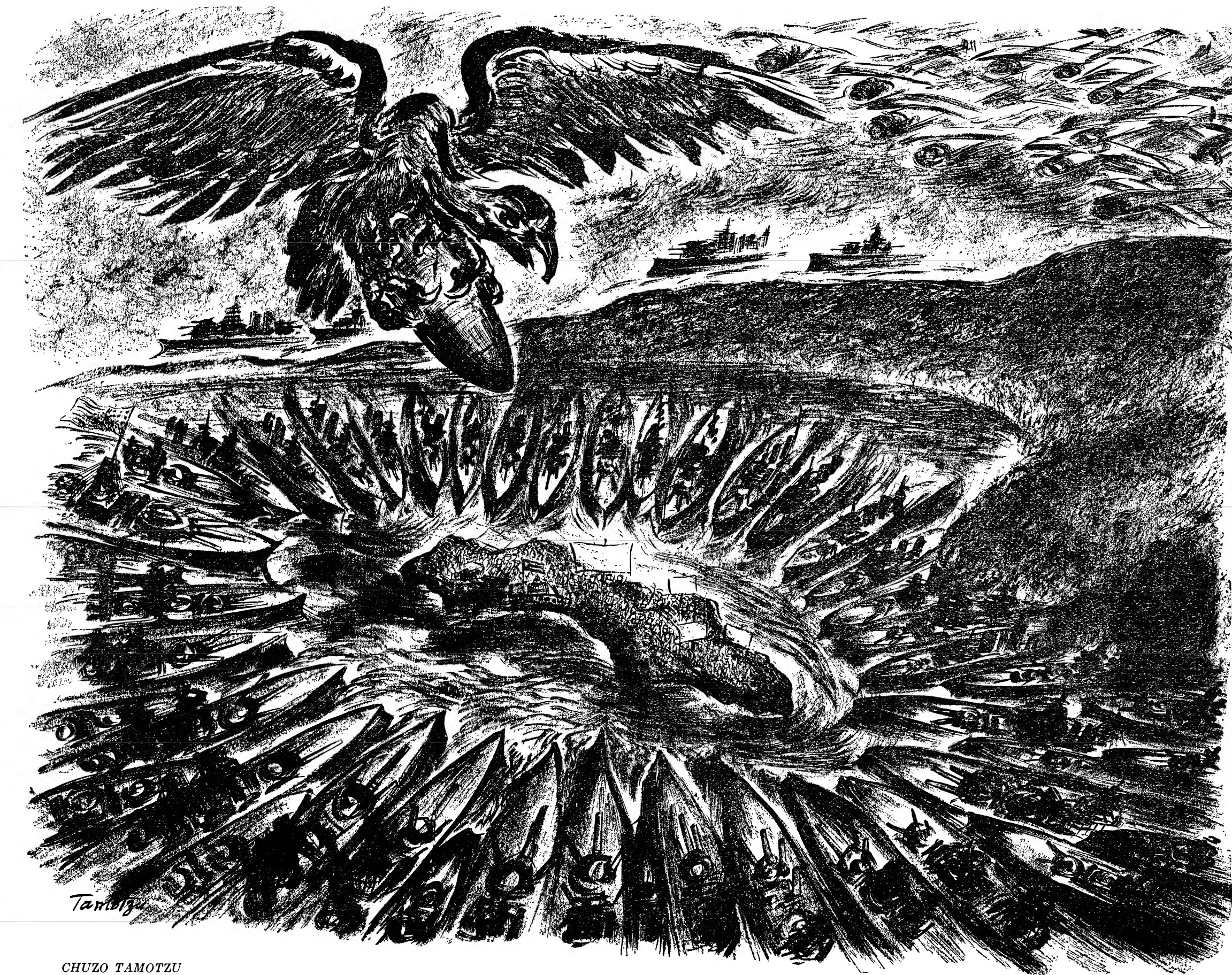
For a long time now editorial writers of the Nation and the New Republic have waxed lyrical over "the trend away from imperialism" on the part of the United States. They have pointed to the withdrawal of marines from Nicaragua, the relaxation of direct naval control in Haiti, the changed relations with Mexico, the Hawes-Cutting Bill program on Philippine independence. The America of Morgan and Mellon and Rockefeller had apparently bowed in humility before the doctrines of sweetness and light. Raymond Leslie Buell expressed it all in the characteristically laudatory formula "the New Deal in foreign affairs." As recently as August 23rd, the New Republic was describing the Platt Amendment as "a hangover from our imperialistic jag of thirty years ago," and congratulating President Roosevelt on having allowed a revolution to take place in Cuba without intervention.

The revolution to which the New Republic referred was the collapse of Machado and his hasty replacement by the rather freely acknowledged designate of Ambassador Welles, Senor Carlos Manuel de Cespedes. When de Cespedes, in turn, was forced out of office and the Commission of Five took over the government on the crest of the bloodless uprising of the army against its Machadista officers, the tender forbearance of the United States Government disappeared immediately. There had been no question of tumult in the situation. Yet, inspired press reports began to issue from Washington to the effect that "in spite of grave fears it is hoped that intervention can be avoided." Mysteriously, the air became thick with cries that "intervention must be avoided, if possible." Finally, President Roosevelt transmitted notes to various Latin American governments explaining that the United States would not intervene in Cuba *except as a last resort*. All this was plainly nothing else but a threat of intervention—and it has been so interpreted in Cuba. Now the threat has been reinforced by the concentration of thirty U. S. war vessels in or near Cuban waters, characterized by the New York Times as "a show of force unequalled by anything in recent history." Presumably the only reason why more ships were not sent is that virtually all the rest of the Atlantic Fleet is in the Far East.

The New York Evening Post, which although a Republican paper, has given general support to Roosevelt's foreign policies, found itself obliged to say editorially: "One can ask for some intelligible reason why there was the greatest forbearance during many bloody excesses, and then a sudden mobilization of the navy at a moment when the island was outwardly more peaceful than at any time during recent months."

How do American liberals square this expedition against Cuba with their recent theories of a trend away from imperialism? Their theories are obviously confounded. Unless they are prepared to regard the aggression against Cuba as just another accident, they must revise their whole notion of what has been taking place in U. S. foreign policy under Hoover and Roosevelt.

Of course, while foreign policy has its continuity, it is not static. Unquestionably there have been changes of late, im-



CHUZO TAMOTZU

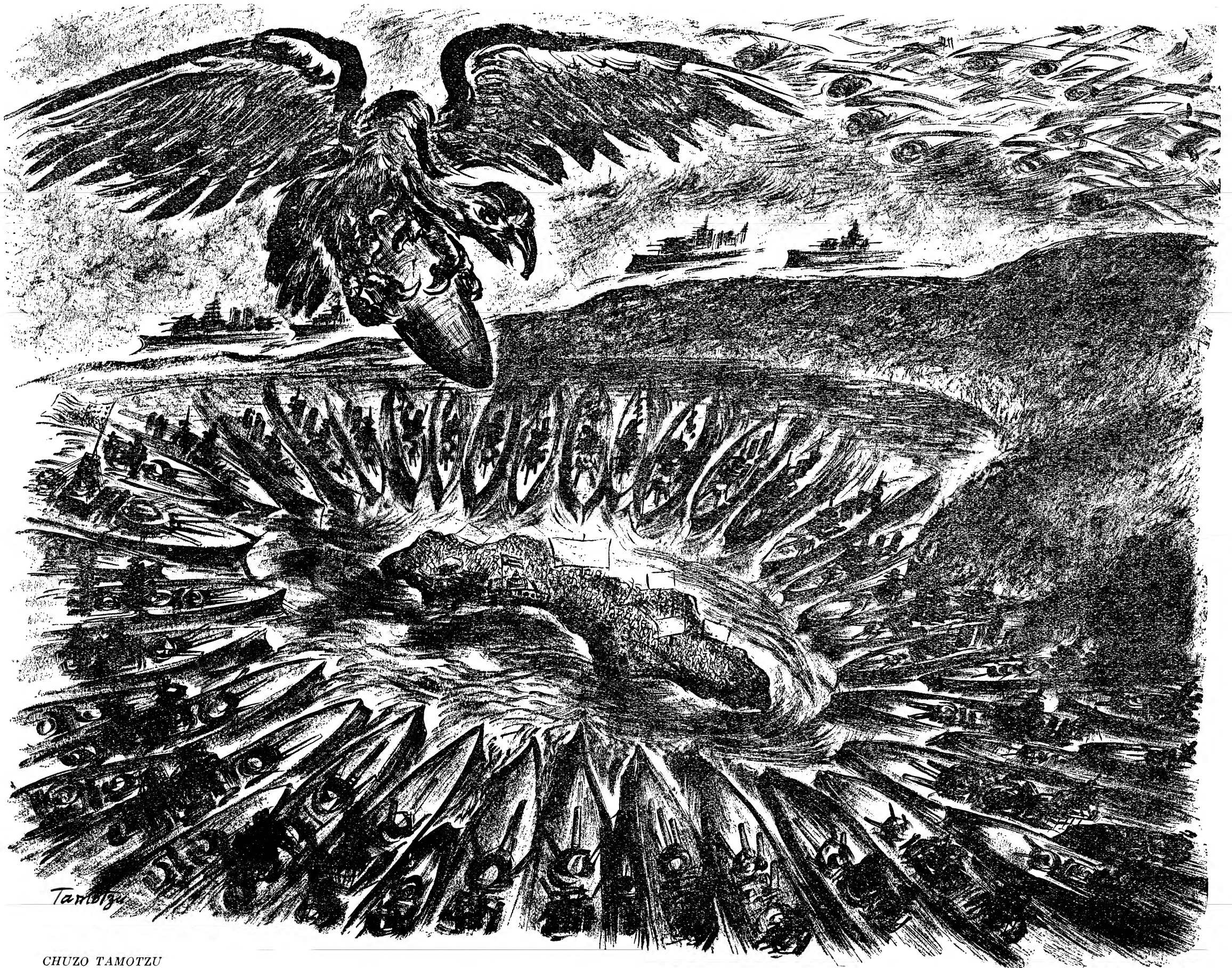
portant changes. The changes have been expressions of a shift in the strategic center of a fundamentally imperialist policy.

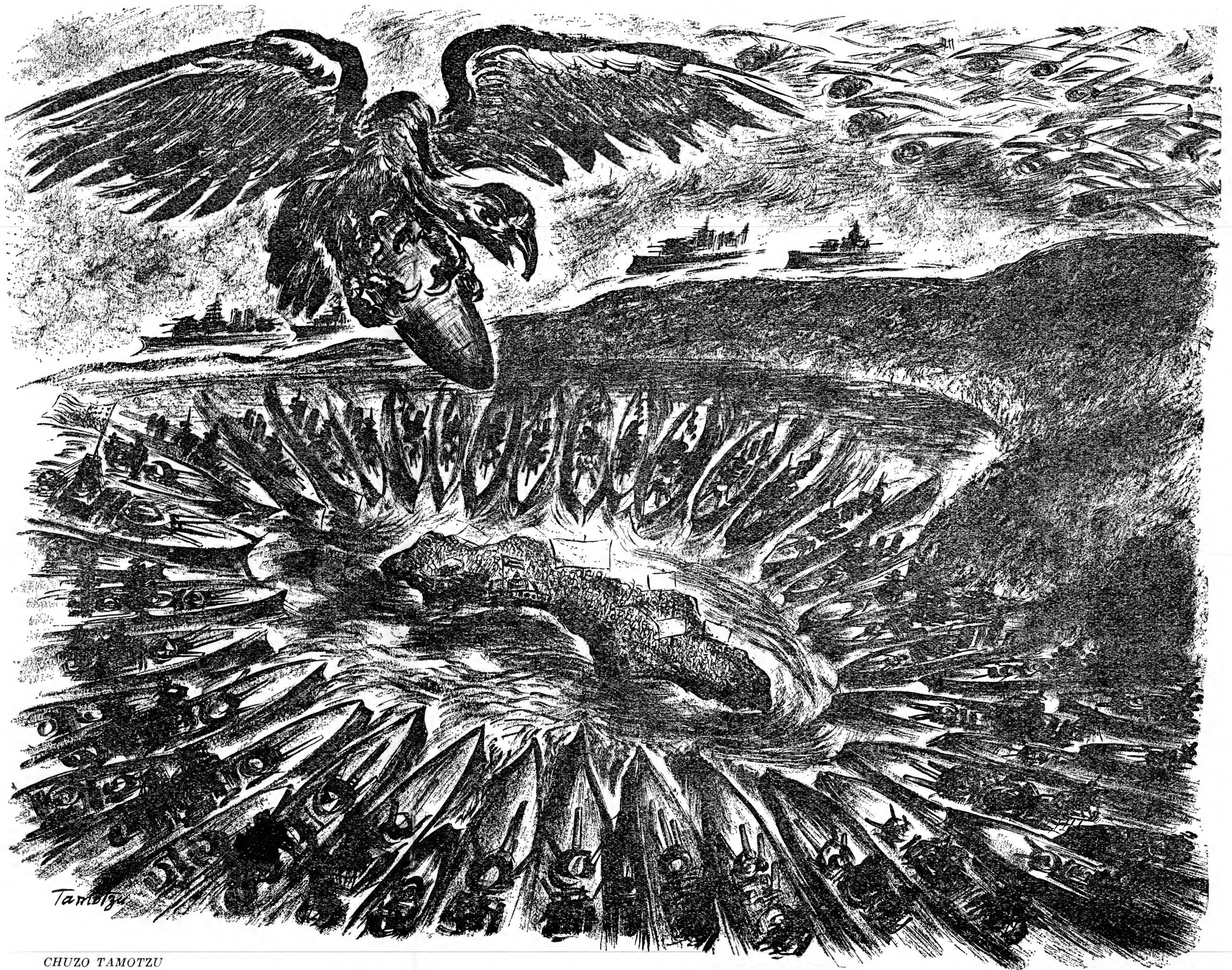
Here it is necessary to go, what may seem, far afield, but we shall return to the Cuban situation in due time, and the reason for our digression will be manifest. Columbus was not the last

to recognize that it may be possible to reach a certain quarter by setting out in a contrary direction. We shall approach the Antilles by way of the Far East.

At the present time the entire primary line of American policy abroad is orientated in the direction of preparation for

war with Japan. It is not only the direct exploitation of China that is at stake, vital though this is for both American and Japanese capitalism today. There is the further fact that with Chinese manpower under her rigid control and all the resources of China at her command, Japan would be in a position





to challenge American imperialism everywhere in the Far East. With a strong alliance in Europe she might challenge for the domination of the world. And already Japan has gobbled up a goodly share of Chinese territory.

What wonder then that the United States Government should have labored unceasingly to break up the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, continued until recently in spite of official disavowals. Or that a Japanese statesman should have remarked, during a visit to these shores early in the year, that his conviction of American amity would be considerably strengthened by the transfer of the Atlantic Fleet to the Atlantic. The United States Government manoeuvred successfully to isolate Japan in the League of Nations. The President-Elect made preparatory gestures in the direction of recognition of Soviet Russia, certainly not because there had been a change of heart toward the Soviet regime, and not entirely because of the pressure for Russian trade to alleviate the economic crisis.

Steadily the tension between the two rival imperialisms has grown. The measure of its progress became apparent to all the world a few months ago, when the Japanese Government let it be known that Japan was no longer prepared to accept the 5:5:3 ratio of naval strength established at the Washington Conference, and at the expiration of the present treaty would insist upon equality with the United States and England. This is countered by an abrupt undertaking in this country to build "up to the full treaty strength." President Roosevelt's naval-building program (adopted as part of the "economic recovery program") creates the certainty of a military and naval budget which in the course of the next few years will approach \$750,000,000. From Japan now comes the charge that the United States is engaging in an armament race with her.

An amusing commentary is afforded by the return from a trip to the Orient of Roy Howard, of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, who has come back "in a mood of great concern over the relations between the United States and Japan." According to the New Republic, "he feels that all the beneficent attempts at internationalism of the past few years have failed as regards the Far East . . . He also recommends that we should at once build our navy up to treaty strength." The New Republic takes issue with Mr. Howard on the latter point. It seems that this liberal journal is afraid Mr. Howard's recommendation is likely to disturb Japan's belief "in our disinterested and friendly intentions . . . It must be remembered," the editorial goes on to say, "that Congress has voted, and the President has signed, a law giving the Philippines their freedom; that the United States officially turned its back upon imperialistic intentions in any part of the world, and that we are likely to make our foreign trade only an easily dispensable luxury. In the light of these facts, would not Mr. Howard's ends be better achieved if we said to Japan: 'Under no circumstances do we propose to fight you for land, trade, or opportunity for investment in Asia. . . .'"

Whether Mr. Howard's position or the New Republic's affords the most comfort to imperialism, it is difficult to say. Mr. Howard at least does not attempt to hide the war danger. The New Republic goes out of its way to champion governmental intentions, and spreads the implication that American imperialism does not propose to fight, when in fact it does propose to fight and the preparations for that fight are an outstanding feature of world policy. To the individual unfamiliar in such matters it is astonishing how far these liberals will go in their eagerness to establish the innocence of the ruling classes. The measure "giving the Philippines their freedom" has been repudiated overwhelmingly by the Filipinos themselves as a measure which did not give freedom at all. It provided that, *if the Filipinos adopted a constitution acceptable to the President of the United States*, then, *at the expiration of ten years*, the Philippine Islands would be declared "independent" with the reservation that a special treaty must be signed with the United States *and that certain military posts in the islands must remain under the control of the United States*.

The significance of the Hawes-Cutting formula was two-fold. While preserving the substance of imperial domination over the Philippines, it allowed the United States to pose as the "white hope" of anti-imperialism in the Far East, as a rallying center against the open aggressions of Japan. Secondly, by

giving the American beet sugar anti-imperialists what they really wanted, it put an end to their sniping tactics at home and consolidated support behind the naval and war programs.

As already suggested, this Philippine policy has its counterpart in Latin America. Japan has developed the irritating habit of comparing China to Latin America, and of explaining her aggressions there by citing the application of the Monroe Doctrine in this part of the world. Thus, when the United States began to concentrate its foreign policy more and more on outmaneuvering Japan, the strategy of the situation demanded that the methods pursued in Latin America become less embarrassing. Moreover, it would hardly do to enter a major war across the seas without providing against rumblings nearer home. The situation is further complicated by the coming Pan-American Congress, at which the whole question of the Monroe Doctrine is scheduled to be aired. Hence the peculiarly hospitable attitude of the United States Government toward the intervention of the League of Nations in the Leticia controversy between Colombia and Peru. Hence the apparent restraint in handling recent obstreperousness on the part of Santo Domingo and Salvador.

In its relation to the Latin American countries nearest at hand, the tactic that has been adopted is simple enough, and it is not a new one in the manual of imperial instrumentalities. It is the tactic of indirect, unostentatious domination, reinforced by the nearby reserve of armed might. If marines are withdrawn from Nicaragua, they leave a puppet government in charge. Similarly in Haiti (from which the marines have not been withdrawn as yet), and other countries. The marines are by no means out of the picture—even when they are in the background. The experience of the past makes it clear that they are ready at hand when the puppet government falters. Does any informed person seriously question that the United States Government continues to be the decisive force in Nicaragua or in Santo Domingo, or that it will continue to control Haiti? Or does anyone suppose that "the changed relations with Mexico" would be possible if the Mexican government had not sufficiently indicated its subservience? Nevertheless, it remains true that the weight of emphasis with regard to specific measures in Latin America is somewhat different as a result of the orientation of major policies on the Far East.

Now let us look at Cuba, where American capital has some \$1,600,000,000 invested, as compared with only slightly more than two and one-quarter times that figure invested in all the other Latin American countries. It is a well-known fact that the bestial Machado ruled by the grace of the United States Government, and that he was discarded by the sugar interests, by Wall Street and by Washington only after there was no other course open. President Coolidge repeatedly did honors to Machado. Harry F. Guggenheim, U. S. Ambassador under Hoover, made it a point to discourage all opposition to the dictator. The latter took every opportunity to cite U. S. Government support as a justification of his regime, notably in speeches when Ambassador Guggenheim sat silently at his side. Meantime, Machado was draining the resources of Cuba to satisfy the demands of American finance capital, was piling up debts, impoverishing the people, dealing death and destruction to workers, peasants and even honest petty-bourgeois nationalists who cried out against his methods.

Because of the economic situation in Cuba and the widespread ferment that Machado's methods had aroused, it became clear that he could no longer control the situation. Only then, when students of the closed colleges and schools were coming under the influence of Communist workers, when peasants were preparing to attack sugar centrals, when the ABC secret terrorist society had recruited thousands of members, when even the well-paid army was growing restive, did Washington prepare to withdraw its support. Shortly thereafter, President Roosevelt sent Mr. Welles to Cuba to take charge of the situation.

What followed is a matter virtually of public record. Although the students had talked and the politicians had schemed, it was the general strike of the workers that spelled Machado's doom. Like wildfire the strike movement spread, caught up larger and larger sections of the population, until the general atmosphere became one of revolution. Then the army deserted Machado, and on August 12th he fled. During all this time Ambassador Welles was holding private meetings in his hotel

with the so-called official opposition elements—the Menocal Conservatives, the Mendieta Unionists—and the ABC leaders—in an effort to prevent any fundamental change. As for the students, most of their leaders occupied themselves with urging the workers to give up the strike now that Machado had disappeared from the scene. The pressure of an aroused working class was not wanted by any of these elements in determining the character of the new government.

As a result of the Welles conferences, a “satisfactory” President was named—Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, former ambassador at Washington and the Secretary of State in Machado’s first cabinet. De Cespedes lasted less than a month. And that brings us to the U. S. naval mobilization stage.

There was no threat of military intervention in the time of Machado. As elsewhere in Latin America, imperialism worked through native tools. There was no threat of military intervention when Machado fell, because an equally willing tool could be put in his place—although the United States Government did send one warship to Havana harbor for the moral effect. Why then has Washington felt obliged to pursue a more vigorous course of action now?

The answer lies in the special turn that events have taken. The Commission of Five consisted of three professors, a journalist, and a banker. They stood for an unclear petty-bourgeois nationalism, and declared themselves against the Platt Amendment, but they comported themselves with typical lack of decisiveness and could hardly be thought to constitute an insurmountable barrier to the objections of Ambassador Welles. The peculiar aspect of the situation was that this indecisive government had been placed in power by the students, through the medium of an army which had deposed its officers. Moreover, whatever may have been the allegiances of the sergeants who succeeded to the command, the soldiers were fraternizing with the workers and peasants, and this was the whole key to the situation.

Imperialism cannot rule through a puppet government if the latter has no dependable army. Consequently, for American imperialism, it is a question of the “re-establishment of discipline” in the Cuban army, or military intervention on the part of the United States. It is certainly not without significance that the rebellious Cuban officers saw fit to entrench themselves in the National Hotel, where Ambassador Welles was staying. Nor that the officers—with a treasonableness almost unexampled in cynicism—declared that they would call for the United States to intervene unless de Cespedes were restored to the Presidency. However, the United States is not unprepared to throw de Cespedes overboard. Even Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin, whom the five commissioners finally decided to make President, seems to be acceptable, providing the army can be brought back under control. Grau San Martin was not too far to the left to participate, with the old-line politicians of the Menocal and Mendieta groups, in the Miami “Opposition Junta.” But, regardless of what shifts may be made at the top, or how long the affair may be drawn out, the U. S. Government will decide for military intervention unless the soldiers can be subjugated and the fraternization with the masses brought to an end.

This is the reason for the thirty warships. This explains why the threat of military intervention hangs over Cuba, at a time when American imperialism seems to be withdrawing forces elsewhere. There is no inconsistency in the United States Government’s Cuban policy and its recent foreign policy as a whole. Indeed, the Cuban episode fits into the picture with revealing exactness. The general policy is one of imperialism holding its covenants while bracing itself for war. Cuba is not only an important center of invested American capital but is also a basic strategic point of American imperialist policy in a military sense. As the key to the Panama Canal, its absolute control is vital for a war with Japan. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, in its article on the Panama Canal and the Caribbean says: “With the chief positions on Cuba and Porto Rico in the hands of the United States, the question of strategy virtually disappears but their loss in case of war quickly change the whole strategic problem.”

The sensitiveness of American imperialism to every development in Cuba is to no small extent an earnest of its general concern with strategic positions. It is an indication of the ripening of the plans for war with Japan. It is a phase of the preparations for that war.



THEODORE SCHEEL

How the drugstore magazines have fared in the crisis—and how the crisis has been treated by the story writers, pulpwood and smoothpaper both, who actually reach the masses.

Depression Fictioneers

Alan Calmer

WHILE journeying through the Soviet Union Louis Aragon, the French revolutionary poet, made the following note on the literature of the Russian people: "In the little book market on the square in Lenin Street (Sverdlovsk), there is a notice hanging near the entrance in the open air on the recently published book of Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics*. We are in the Urals in 1932 and I think of Paris. What is called literature for the masses in Paris? The detective stories of Edgar Wallace."

Trashy commercial fiction also constitutes the literature of the American masses. The thrillers in the woodpulp magazines and the romances in the smoothpaper periodicals still make up the reading diet of millions of American housewives, children of shopkeepers, and proletarians of the counter and bench.

Nor has the economic crisis severely reduced the number of these readers. It is true that of seventy-three genuine pulpwood magazines issued in 1930 only thirty-three are published today; that the circulation of the nickel weeklies has fallen; that the quarter "true" story magazines have cut their prices in the attempt to retain their readers, who consist chiefly of girls from the lower classes. On the other hand, the "depression" has driven large numbers of unemployed to read popular fiction as an inexpensive way of forgetting their troubles. The rise of "back issue" stores, where old copies may be purchased at six for a quarter, is a sign of this new reading audience.

The economic crisis, however, has had some effect upon the contents of commercial fiction. Stories in which the "depression" forms at least the background are appearing more and more frequently, especially in the smooth paper publications. In many of these tales the "depression" is depicted as a blessing in disguise, as a catharsis which relieves the most involved entanglements—particularly of lovers; while in others the slogans of the Hooverian and New Deal epochs, such as "Buy Now" and "Back to the Farm," are dished out in a fictional dressing. Critics who moan about propaganda in revolutionary fiction, or who sneer at the Marxian thesis of the class basis of literature, should examine these "depression" stories. They parrot the psychology and

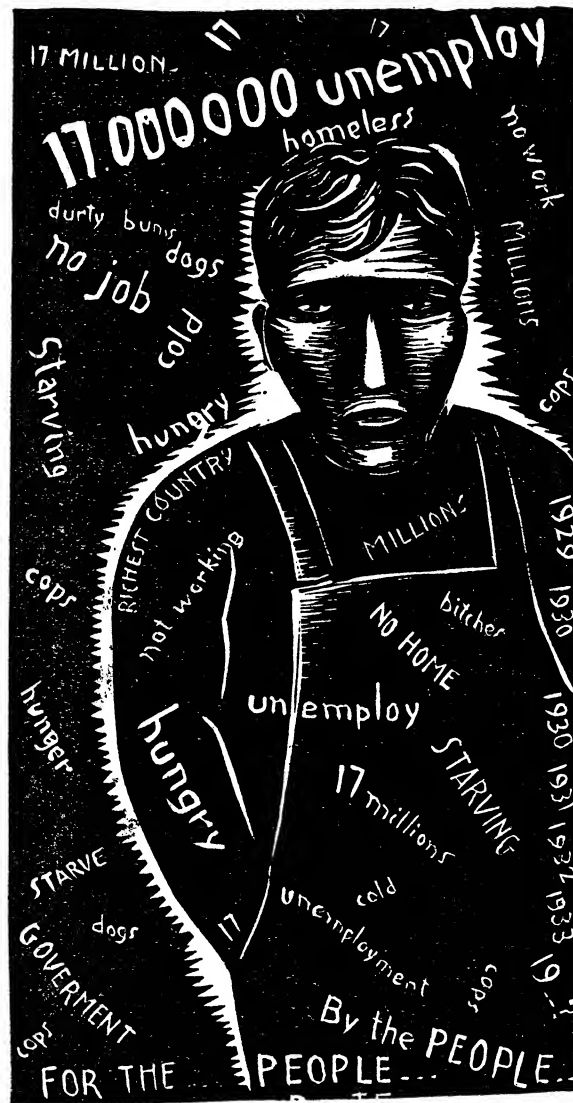
propaganda of the American bourgeoisie in a blatant fashion.

The favorite theme of these stories is the manner in which the "depression" serves as a marvelous purging force in removing the complications which keep lovers apart, as a benevolent fate which brings lovers together—especially among the rich. For example, in Elmer Davis' *Rhapsody in Red* (Colliers, Nov. 28, '31), our young hero, whose family fortune was lost in Russian imperial bonds, cannot marry the heroine because she is so wealthy; but lo! he lands a forty thousand a year job as a direct result of bad times, while the heroine's father is taken for a ride in the stock market—thus are the lovers united. Again in another tale by the same author—*Master of Arts* (Colliers, July 11, '33)—the heroine, forced by the economic crisis to take a lowly office job at eighteen per, is wooed and won by the nephew of the president of the corporation. The serial novel, *Jigsaw* (Good Housekeeping, '32), by Faith Baldwin—who specializes in chic, up-to-the minute romances—is a repetition of the same motif; except that the "depression" irons out the difficulties of a number instead of just a pair of lovers.

Critics who scoff at the proletarian slogans that literature is a weapon and that it may be in the forefront of the class struggle, may observe these concepts in action (from their own side of the fence), in Miss Baldwin's novellette, *Bank Holiday* (Cosmopolitan, June '33), which must certainly have been completed no later than a month or so after March 4th. Although it deals with a set of characters, it contains a number of general social pictures of the effect of the bank crash. Needless to say, it is full of descriptions of the great spirit of optimism and confidence displayed by the lower strata of the population. The "holiday" has a miraculous effect upon two wealthy employers. It makes the senior partner feel conscience-stricken for not thinking more

about the welfare of his faithful secretary and leads him to pay all of the hospital bills of her sick mother. It makes the junior partner spurn the love of a beautiful heiress to marry his stenographer.

Devotees of popular fiction who insist that the aim of such writings is "to entertain, not to point a moral," will find it



difficult to reconcile such definitions with the sociological musings embodied in many "depression" stories. Here is a sample from *This is America* by Mary Synon (Red Book, Aug. '32), the story of a love which was broken by extravagant living and mended by the purging wrought by unemployment:

"How many of these people, tramping beside her now, had anything more in this springtime night than she had . . . What was life giving them? Blows, blows, blows. But they were taking them on the chin. Not reeling over, against the ropes. That was the spirit of the throng . . . Courage! That was it. Soldiers of an army without banners, they marched on this battlefield of existence as steadily, as bravely as, in her girlhood, men had gone to war. That was the way to take life."

In *Between Shirt Sleeves* (by Charles Brackett, Saturday Evening Post, July 9, '32—story of a self-made millionaire wiped out in the stock market who wins back the love of his social-climbing wife) the hero tells a wealthy audience that talk of hard times bringing a "bloody uprising" in the United States is "sheer nonsense," because the vast majority of people (the rich and poor) are "so much of a piece," that is, belong to the same class! In *Kiss and Jail*, by Arthur Somers Roche (Cosmo, Aug. '32), we are treated to more Redbook philosophy; especially illuminating is the theory contained in this story that the impoverishment brought about by the crisis represents a process of natural selection!

"The Great Depression had not endured long enough to set all water seeking its level. For a while longer some of the unfit would continue in the high places . . ."

Kiss and Jail is one of a sequence of stories dealing with the "New Poor," in which the "depression" renders the rich penniless in order to lead them into exciting, as well as profitable, adventure. Sometimes the process is different, but the result is the same; thus in *Fear in Her Eyes*, by Clarence Budington Kelland (Colliers, Jan. 21, '33), the "depression" in his father's stove business enables the hero to linger in southern Europe instead of returning to take his place in the factory, and thereby leads him into romantic adventure which nets him the love of a contessa.

The theme of the "depression" as the magic force which resolves the difficulties of lovers is illustrated also in stories dealing with lower class, white-collar elements. In *Room and Board* (Pictorial Review, Mar. '32), by Ellis Parker Butler, the hero is thrown out of a job in order to be liberated from the burden of supporting his parasitic relatives and to give him a chance to set up a home of his own; with this accomplished, his job is returned to him. In *Love Laughs at Unemployment* (Liberty, Aug. 8, '31), by Charles Divine, two lovers, who are not making enough money to get married, are both fired. Desperately, to "spite" the "depression," they get married. A newspaper learns of their case and headlines it; the next morning there are thirty-seven letters and six telegrams offering them new jobs at from eighteen to fifty a week! In *Depression Lovers* (True Confessions, Aug. '33), the same theme is treated in the form of a "true" story.

The "depression" also brings lovers together by leading them back to the farm. The stories dealing with this subject are fictional equivalents of the farm slogan of the New Deal administration. For example, one may peruse Mr. Moley's article, *A Permanent Breadline . . . or Back to the Country?* (Cosmo June '33), turn to the very next page and find the same idea dressed up in fiction—in *The Return*, by Pearl S. Buck. Here the hero, fired from his city job, returns to his father's farm, where the ailments of city life are cured by the "healing of the land." Almost an identical plot is found in *Corn*, by Margaret W. Jackson (American, April '33), which surpasses all other farm tales in its moralizing:

"Taxed as the land was, mortgaged and burdened as it was, low as the prices of farm produce were, it was yet the last and the best, the last and the first thing men had . . . what did it mean, then? That the terrible adjustment was at last complete. It disciplined back to reality . . . Now things were at last back where they belonged. Now the

country could begin again to build and grow and establish itself with a new firmness and power."

Fictional counterparts of the slogan, "Buy Now," may be found in the humorous stories of Sam Hellman. In *Be Your Bank Roll* (S. E. P., Oct. 24, '31), the wife calls off the "depression" by instituting a widespread buying campaign. In *Shaken Down* (Red Book, July '32), a mayor who is "fed up" with the "depression," overcomes it by making the speakeasies pay for unemployment relief, by compelling the contractors who "overlooked" building specifications to build more skyscrapers, and by "reviving the buying habit."

Fiction dealing with the unemployed and industrial workers is, however, hard to find. When we do discover narratives about the former, they are described as idlers and racketeers. In *California, Here I Come*, by Anne Cameron (S. E. P., Mar. 26, '32), a male and female panhandler, who are sponging on some charitable old ladies, are shipped off to California. The former steals the latter's auto. But she gets there anyway and squawks because she receives nothing but "staple groceries" at the welfare station. She is invited to join a state unemployed march. She finds the thief and her auto in the march. She starts a fight and precipitates a riot. In *The Well-Bread Line* (Liberty, Dec. 5, '31), by Nina Wilcox Putnam, a down-and-out millionaire makes friends with the "bums" who select those breadlines where they can get dessert. He gets a job as publicity man for a large hotel. He entertains the "former bums of the breadlines" in grand style in the dining room. The papers feature his "christian charity" and the hotel lands a ministers' convention as a reward. *Bread Line* (Liberty, July 2, '32), by Karl Detzer, is told in the first person. An unemployed chemical worker is offered a flop for the night by two gangsters who are hiding from the police in the bread line. He follows them—to the police station. They turn out to be detectives and he turns out to be a safe-blower. In *Settled for Cash*, by Edgar Franklin (Argosy, Aug. 5, '33), two wealthy gentlemen smash into a house standing near the read. They give the occupant two hundred dollars for damages to the house. In reality it is an abandoned shack, which was broken into by the unemployed worker who pockets the money.

The Negro, afflicted more than anyone else by the economic crisis, receives the same treatment. As in most popular stories written in the past, the Negro is depicted in these "depression" stories as a shiftless and stupid idler. Arthur K. Akers is the author of a series of tall tales (*Crazy Like a Fox, Double Entry, Cash Money for Casualties*—Red Book '32) dealing with Negroes "who simply can't be depressed." All of them are "Alabama Idylls," laid in the same locale in which the recent Tuscaloosa atrocities occurred.

Occasionally, industrial workers appear in these "depression" narratives—usually as minor characters. In one of them, *The Light of Battle* (Liberty, Jan. 14, '33), by Alfred Fernelius, steel-construction workers obtain the support of their press boss in bucking the financiers of the corporation who have just given them another ten per cent wage-cut. The workers decide to strike, especially since the company has a large time-contract. The press boss advises them not to strike; he barges into the directors' office and bets them \$100 against a ten per cent "raise" that they can't last a week working in the press room. They accept. Only one of them can stand the gaff, but he wins the admiration of everyone by risking life and time to keep pace with the strongest steel worker. Nevertheless, at the next board meeting, a 5% "raise" (that is half of the wage-cut) is unanimously voted to the staunch press-room workers.

And Forsaking All Others, by Norma Patterson (Good Housekeeping, Jan. '33), deals with an aged minister in a mill town. The poor workers need leadership of the "right kind," not that of "professional agitators." He gives it to them. When mass lay-offs occur, the mill-hands march in protest on the mill. The minister braves the mob, stops them, and makes them pray. He gets back home in time to see his daughter married to the nephew of the richest man in town.

But despite all this, Mr. H. Bedford-Jones, a prolific popular fictionist who may be regarded as the spokesman for his craft, assures us most insistently that magazine fiction "shuns in horror all propaganda."

The First Red Mayor

Ben Field

MINNESOTA was the first state to have a Hunger March of farmers. Minnesota was the first state to have a Red creamery, the Mesaba Range Creamery. The town of Crosby in Minnesota elected the first Red Mayor in the history of the country, Emil Nygard. And as the workers and farmers of America must elect other Reds in their growing struggles for bread, it is of utmost importance that we see these Crosby workers, the Mayor, the town, the Reds of Minnesota.

But Nygard is hard to bag. On our drive north we hear one day he is somewhere on the range, another day he is off to Milwaukee, a third day like a big moose he is breaking the furthest Minnesota woods. And when we do get to Crosby we are directed to the armory, from the armory to his home, and there are told he is in Hibbing, the next day to land in Duluth.

The town of Crosby looks like a thousand other one-horse towns. A main street hot and dusty in the sun. The bank. The stores plastered with raring blue eagles. The town cop with a glittering badge on the curb like a waterpump. The upper end of the town with shaven lawns and touched-up houses. And then the railroad tracks. A few rusty cars loaded with ore. A bony cow swinging her bag home. And the jobless squatting on doorsteps, their idle hands in their way.

Near the tracks we meet a miner and roadworker. He hasn't earned more than five cents the last two months. He says, "It'll be harder electing our Nygard this election. He's smart. But there's some things he could have done. He could have wiped out the damned police force. He sits home reading when he should be around with the fellows like the Socialist Mayor of Ironton. Lots of times he talks about Russia when he should be talking about conditions nearer home."

Socialist Mayor in Ironton

That evening we meet the chairman of the unemployed council, back from picking chokecherries. We take a walk through the dark town. We sit on a bench near the lake. Arni is only in his early twenties, tall, lanky. Has worked as a pitman in the mines and in a railroad shop. Went to high school where he pitched for the school team, a southpaw. "When my control was good, they could not hit me. I went to the party school in Minneapolis. They had to tear with wild horses some of the things out of my noodle. I haven't lost all of it yet. Here in Crosby we've done some things. Emil has tried hard. Sure, he's made mistakes. So have we all, and we didn't work together properly. But no other party would even have tried what we did. Still, we don't understand yet what the United Front is, we don't trust the I.W.W. when they really want to work with us, we've got our petty jealousies. The plenum and the Open Letter 'll give us a good pumping. Some of our comrades may have read Marx but they don't know Lenin. I think we can win our next elections if we go to it the right way. Iron discipline, good control, political push." Arni, living alone, his father and mother have gone off to Alaska to earn a living. Somewhere in a tree a night bug rattles like a breaking chain. The stars burn above and in the lake.

Most of the mines around Ironton are closed. The Sagamore, a great open pit, has a few men clawing about in the water. There is a track switcher. A Bucyrus, and then a huge shovel with a five-yard bucket. Endless stockpiles.

A townsman says the Mayor is spading potatoes. We find him at last in his garden. He leans against an earthenware pot full of portulacas. Just back from the road where the "boys" are working off their relief. A business man wanted some of the dirt. Sure, help yourself. Help yourself.

There are about 300 unemployed in Ironton. "We got some of them cutting muskeg. We're going to have a skating rink this winter. Our population's about a thousand."

"Did you have a strike against forced labor?"

"No sir. In Crosby they kicked up a rumpus for nothing, thought they had the whole state by the ear. They got a good licking. Some of the Swedes and Montenegrins and such as that here in Ironton got hot under the collar too. But we cooled them off. It's tough. I know. I work as foreman on a steam-shovel when there's work. But you've got to have patience. We bought wood for the unemployed. We got a truck to bring them out. Many of the boys lost their auto licenses. They can't go for berries or wood. They can't pay their water bills and other taxes so they take the licenses away. I got in touch with the commissioner and he said they have no right to do it. But they took them."

"Did the town do anything about it?"

"I sent a letter."

Only a few feet from where we are talking are the town limits of Ironton. Then you have Crosby. "We do all we can within the law. Patience is a big item. We got the truck and put up a windbreak. We bought fine stumpage for \$210. Each man got 12 or 13 cords of wood."

How about coats, boots, etc?

The stores were for giving the unemployed everything and then charging it against the relief. "We put a stop to that. We've got to keep our books straight. We've given them enough wood. In Crosby Nygard bought 80 acres of stumpage without looking at it. All jackpine. He paid \$600 for it. Our stumpage was a real bargain."

Wood, wood, wood as if the workers were woodlice, wood-beetles. And how about the NRA?

He hesitates, then: "I think it 'll help. Wages are going up. The Democrats are better men than the Republicans. I think Roosevelt's really trying to help business."

Has the town slashed wages?

"We've kept our books straight. I'm still getting \$35. It used to be a little side money for me. But we're better off than a lot of towns I know of. Some of the business men were afraid the companies wouldn't re-lease the mines. They did. Most of the town is now on our side. Only one councilman is bucking me. I can handle him. And I don't hide my beliefs."

But he doesn't say anything about his socialism. What is there to distinguish him from a Democrat? He just happens to be a good fellow who happens to be a Socialist and belongs to another political party. He weighs every word as if he were telling state secrets: "I believe in voting for the best man." Yes, even if he's Republican. Republicans and Democrats, head and tail of the same beast.

"We're sitting pretty. We're only bonded for \$30,000. Other towns can take a leaf from our books. We've managed to keep the books straight. That's a lot these days."

We thank the courteous, middle-aged gentleman, the Socialist Mayor of Ironton, feeding his workers wood, concerned like a fat Dutch housewife, above all, in keeping things "straight."

The Communist Mayor

Camels Hall in Duluth is full of organizers and workers from the fields, mines, shops. A young comrade tells us about Nygard. He himself has just come out of one of the worst work-houses in the country, condemned fifty years ago, slop buckets, food so rotten his body was all covered with carbuncles and he had to be taken to the hospital. He says, "Emil's one of the cleverest men in the movement. Minnesota has produced men like Hathaway too. In St. Paul on the Hunger March, I brought Emil to the city hall. A comrade was with us who's a university graduate. Emil said, 'You've got a higher degree. You're a graduate of a worker's college, a jail'. A cop tried

to shove him. Emil pushed him off. When the cop found out he was the Mayor of Crosby, didn't he turn pale. 'Mr. Mayor, I'm a workingman too. I got to do my job. I didn't know who you was.'

Nygard comes in. The plenum's to begin shortly. We get into a small room. We had expected to see a tall rangy fellow like one of those blazing fireweeds from the hard Minnesota soil. Nygard admits with a laugh that he is getting fat, a Milwaukee goitre. He talks with a brogue and is freckled so that it is hard to shake off the impression he is an Irishman. His fingers are rusty looking as if from handling iron ore. He's just bought himself a pair of shoes. The old ones are in a package in his lap.

His father, a miner, worked in British Columbia and on the Iron Range. And so when Emil was 16 the first step for him was also into the mines. Until about three years ago he took a hack at many things. Harvesting in North Dakota wheat fields, tramping timber to prop the roof the mine, loading tram cars in northern Michigan, firing locomotives in Illinois, leading a protest strike against conditions in a boarding house, trying to work his way through a university, sticking it for a year and then half-dead with hunger, firing his books into a garbage can and hopping his way home by freight.

His hair stands up for a moment like the comb of a devilish cock. "When I got back to Crosby, we started a fight to clean up the town. A clerk, a woman, had gotten away with between \$3,000 and \$4,000. We got our forces into the Taxpayers' Club, a reformist organization, and took control. The club had 500 voters. A lot of small business men supported us. The unemployed council had about 300 members. Our platform was: No reduction in taxes to the mining companies. Fifteen dollars a month relief for a couple. Two dollars for each dependent, outside of clothing. Equal distribution of all municipal work. Abolition of the Police Commission. Removal of the village attorney and reduction of his salary from \$100 to \$50. Unemployment insurance.

"We elected three candidates, Plott, a socialist for Council, Curran a mason man for clerk, and a communist for Mayor. I got up on the street corners attacked the police and politicians and challenged them to arrest me. The Crosby Courier and Ranfier attacked Soviet Russia. Russia was dumping manganese. Our ore here is ferrous manganese. That was why there was no work. I challenged them to debate me. They didn't show up. The last week the campaign flared up. The other side thought they had the elections sewed up. These tools of the mine owners did some digging in the foul and what explosions they came out with. They called me a boozier, a welcher, a green kid. I made a speech in which I said if what they were after was whiskers, why not import a billygoat. The Mayor running for re-election was 60. I got 529 votes as against 331 and 301. The old Mayor pulled out of town."

Tried to Abolish Cops

Nygard takes out a box of snuff and drops a pinch into his mouth. "We forced the closed bank to release the city money. About 75% of this \$23,000 went directly and indirectly into relief the first two months of the administration. The state added \$5,000, and then sent a relief director here. We brought up the question of forced labor. I gave up the chair at a council meeting, and made a motion for cash relief. No other council member would vote for it at first. The presence of hundreds of workers made Plott and Hagglund vote for it. It passed. Next morning Hagglund had a heart attack. The socialist, Plott, got together with the business men and called another council meeting at 11 o'clock to reconsider the motion. They phoned me. When I got over, the hall was flooded with business men. They were ready to mob me. I voted against it. The only one. We called a mass meeting of workers. We decided on a strike. Only 11 scabs were working on the road. I went out and pulled them off. So long as I was Mayor they had nothing to fear. They would get their relief. The woman relief director raved and cried and said she would close up the office. The state director of relief came down with thugs and deputies. The R.F.C. official said it was the first time he knew of a Mayor fighting against state and town. They wanted to bribe the chairman of the unemployed council with a \$125 job. He sent them to hell. At a mass meeting the director offered

a compromise: 37½ cents an hour for town work and 45 cents for state work. 25% of the state work to be paid in cash. He promised to raise relief to a maximum of \$25 in food value and clothing, to give more meat, even to allow the workers to trade with the cooperative. The smooth talk fooled the workers. They accepted."

We tell Nygard about the miner's criticism. He explains. He had wanted to abolish the police commission. The state legislature, however, had passed a law specifically aimed at Crosby preventing a Mayor from removing the police commission. Nygard had appointed in place of the tool of the mine owners a garage mechanic. The other two members are a jeweler and druggist. He cut down wages from \$135 to \$110. He had wanted only one policeman and the rest a worker's volunteer corp. The council voted against him. The policemen, however, are careful now about bulldozing the workers.

They had been able to remove the village attorney, a dictator of the old lickspittle council. An attorney from Brainerd was put in his place. The bank wanted one of its own men for that job. It refused to cash warrants for the town. The town, after a while, couldn't get the warrants cashed anywhere. The bank officials began drumming it into the heads of the workers that Nygard's bullheadedness would result in scrip for them. The council voted Murphy the banker in.

Nygard proposed salary cuts also for the Mayor, the clerk, and the council. His from \$50 to \$35, the clerk's from \$165 to \$125, the councilmen's from \$40 to \$25. What a howl they raised. If Nygard was willing to take a big slash, let him. As a result, the council took only ten dollars off for each one of the aldermen. They get \$15 for each meeting and he \$17.50. "And that's a hell of a lot too much," he says.

Consults Workers

We told Nygard about Ironton. "We've had more to buck up against. Crosby is in the hole about \$135,000. We've got from 5 to 6 times as many jobless. Now about this timber. Four dealers got together and framed it up so that only one would bid. They jacked up from \$200 to \$600. I said it was preposterous to pay so much. The council said I had wanted free wood for the town and now I was against it. It was about 1500 cords of hardwood. If I voted against it, the workers would suffer. I had to vote in favor of the bid."

We are talking in a small room that had once been a doctor's office. Outside the plenum's getting ready to swing into action. Bill Schneiderman, district organizer, comes in with a briefcase. He is the one who in courthouse square addressed the workers, his hands going like an oiler's testing the heat of the great engine shanks.

"The workers of Crosby realize how I was handicapped," says Nygard, "I've got a group of them as an advisory council whom I consult more than the council. They know our enemies are united against us. They weren't fooled when the business men wanted me to keep away from the State Hunger March. 'You know how these Reds are. You'll get your head cracked.' But it was the town's black eye they were mostly worried about. And the other tricks they played on us. They put the election for members of schoolboard back two days and caught us flat-footed. We had to use stickers. We did pile up quite a lot of votes for Jacobsen, once a miner, and now town gravedigger. Our fault."

Two farm organizers pass the open door. They had been stopped in the streets by the police and ordered to leave town by nightfall. They'll leave, however, when they are good and ready. And that is after the plenum.

"Other cities that elect our own Mayors will profit by our mistakes. The whole country's heard about us. Why, I received 18 proposals. One from a New Hampshire girl. She wrote she didn't know what a communist was, but if I was for the workers, I must be big-hearted."

Nygard takes his shoes and hurries into the plenum. The ranked chairs are filled. A U. S. Navy comrade with tattoos on his hairy arms waves his hand. Arni rushes by with a load of leaflets, a broad grin on his face. The crowded hall is dim and smoky like an engine room. Nygard is lost up front. The door closes. We go out into the throbbing city. The blue eagles with their left claws like wrenches are flattened against the store windows.

Water-Pig

Arthur Pense

THEY doubted whether he would come to work that day. They worried because they might lose the day's wages. Little mounds of unstitched coats lay on the floor like black graves. The shop could not operate while one section was idle, particularly Harry's section.

The blue blood of the shop was Harry, the greatest stitcher in New York. He was paid steady wages, work or no work. The boss used him to speed up the set of operators. Harry was a "hustler."

Early in the morning that day the operators were told that Harry the stitcher's little girl was very ill, that Harry himself might come to work only in the afternoon.

For many weeks the workers had asked impatiently when the fitter would untie the small bundles of unsewn jackets which lay huddled up in a corner of the shop. In other factories the Season had begun. But here every morning there was a new reason for the delay, either the manufacturer failed to send trimmings or pocket lining, or the fitter's wife gave birth. Thus every morning the workers left the shop with resignation.

At last the day came when the fitter took the bundles apart and distributed the work among the sections. But the shop had not been working two days when there came this sudden interruption.

Simon Nusbaum, the chairman of the shop, doubted the story about Harry's baby. He suspected that the tale was made up so that Harry could come after lunch and clean up the floor at top speed in one afternoon.

Isie the lining maker said: "If the operators weren't such darn fools they would get rid of Harry, and there would be peace in the shop."

Some time before 11 o'clock in the morning Harry trudged into the shop. The black derby on his head seemed to weigh him down. His eyes were bloodshot from a sleepless night.

Only the boss and the shape sewer had the privilege of his greetings and information about his sick child. The operators were brushed aside as he passed through the shop. Only the four right wingers came up to him and talked in whispers. From his smile it was evident that the baby was well or improving.

As he passed Nusbaum he met the chairman's suspicious gaze.

"Oh, hello 'comrade' Nusbaum!" he said with special emphasis on "comrade." "Hey, comrade Simon, did you ever ride horse-back on a bed bug? Comrade Simon, did you ever kiss a bear underneath its tail? Comrade Simon would you indorse my application for membership in the Communist Party?"

Simon's offenses were: a collection for the Communist Party campaign fund and his activity in the rank and file movement.

"Indorse you? The Communist party doesn't accept Water-Pigs into its ranks."

"You mean 'hippopotamuses'," said Isie the lining maker.

The line of silent operators at the wall changed their positions from one leg to the other, folding and unfolding their arms, watching the outcome of the mock quarrel.

"That's it, a hyppopotamus!" said the chairman. "Considering his fleshy jaw . . ."

"But a hypo isn't a water-pig," said Isie, "In the dictionary it's called a river-horse."

Some operators became indignant and stopped forward.

"How can an animal which looks like a hog be called a horse?" asked the joiner.

"Did ever a horse roll in the mud like a hog?" said Nietchoba the sleeve maker.

Well, we will settle it at water-pig instead of river horse." Simon Nusbaum waved his hands.

Now Harry meditatively took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves and settled on the bench in front of his machine. The

workers doubled up in their seats. The machines started with a whine. Isie was the last one to take his place. Soon the shop was filled with a roar; the chorus of the machines resembled a rainstorm in the woods.

Hardly any time passed before the lower strap of Harry's machine fell off the pulley.

The turner brought him a pincher and two wire hooks. Harry knelt down and shortened his strap. Then he tested his machine with quick, crunching, crisp stitches like his coughs.

Faster, faster he worked. The pile was consumed.

"Hey turner," he called and held out his hands.

Charlie the assistant pocket maker turned to Isie. "Look at him, the way he is rushing," he said.

"He wants to swallow up the whole shop," the lining maker answered.

"Gee, I feel as if my wrists are going to bust," complained Charlie.

As often as a few fronts gathered near the pocketmakers the turner snatched them away, so that the bench was always empty.

Then in the midst of the roar the assistant pocket maker trembled and threw back his head. One or two workers jumped over the table and discovered that Charlie's finger was stabbed by the needle. The needle projected above and underneath his finger. The workers extracted it with the strap pincher.

"The iodine! Bring some iodine!" Isie the lining maker called.

"What do you want iodine for?" the boss said. "Let him take his finger into the toilet and This is the best remedy." He seemed to have solved the problem as he was standing near the turners table and turning nonchalantly a long string of pocket flaps.

Charlie staggered out of the shop saying he would not work with Harry any more. The operators doubled up again. The machines grunted.

When he returned from the toilet he was bandaging his finger with a rag which he had picked up from the floor. But he didn't return to his machine.

"What's the trouble now?" the boss asked him.

"I am not going to work with him! I don't want to be killed in this shop!" Charlie protested.

Harry threw a contemptuous glance at the operators and went on with his work. The four right wingers began to shout: "Sit down! Sit down! Don't make any trouble!"

The raging of the machines subsided. One could only hear the soft hum of the motor, and the grunts of Harry's machine. The operators looked at the chairman. Nusbaum hesitated. He watched their faces. "Are they willing and ready?" he asked himself. "No, they are not. They wait for me to drag them; to plead with them!"

Not even the rebellious lining maker dared to stand up from his machine.

"What happened to you? Why don't you work?" The boss ran from one operator to the other. "Sit down Charlie we won't have any pockets to hand."

One by one the machines began to click and to crunch. The fight seemed to be finished. But Charlie placed himself on the window sill, with his knees under his chin. "If you are willing to work with him you can work without me," he told the boss.

Then it happened, as the edge of a coat was rushing along the gage, and Harry's fingers began to jump nervously with dazzling swiftness within a hair's breadth of the needle, that the bottom of the coat was reached. Harry had to make the turn nicely around the bottom. He stopped with his heel on the tread to hold the speeding machine as he carefully turned the coat on the machine table.

Snap! The strap broke in two places.

"Hey, turner, hooks!"

Again Harry was kneeling underneath the machine, adding

an inch of length to the strap. Presently out of the raging machine-storm came Harry's short desperate cry, then a groan.

"Stop the power!" the chairman shouted.

The plant stopped. Harry seemed to have a scuffle under the table. The workers rushed to him. The boss came on the scene pushing them back.

"It's nothing! It's nothing! Go back to your benches!" he cried.

The four reactionaries, Harry's confidants, crawled back. The other workers gathered about Harry and extricated him from underneath the machine.

His bloodless face was smeared with oily dust. His vest, shirt and undershirt were torn from his body. They were caught by the strap as he was placing it on the pulley; a wide, two inch ugly scrape across his hanging breasts was traced by the clothing as it was torn from him by the turning wheel.

"To your benches! To your benches!" the boss shouted again and jostled a worker who stood nearby. The worker was not in the least dismayed. "What do you think we are?" the worker protested, thrusting the boss to one side. Usually this worker would swallow his humiliations and keep his peace. The boss was taken by surprise. He raised his hand and slapped the worker in the face.

"Comrades, comrades! He is beating a worker!" Simon Nusbaum's voice filled the shop. The workers left Harry in the chair to shift for himself. Anna the finisher came to his help, applying cold water with her handkerchief to Harry's sores.

The workers joined in the fight and brought the boss down to the floor between piles of coats. Some workers attempted to part the belligerents.

"Harry is fainting!" Anna shrieked, to which some workers answered: "Who cares? Let him die, the water-pig!"

"Hey, don't scold him! Don't scold a guy when he is in a pinch." Isie the lining maker reprimanded them.

The workers dropped the boss. He was escorted to his office by the four right wingers who were dusting off his creased pants the while.

"Whores!" the workers hurled at them. "Traitors! Down on your knees and lick his soles! Your honor for a mess of pottage!"

The factory door was thrust open. A crowd of curious workers were jamming the dark hallway. They had been attracted by the uproar.

Workers were taking Harry down into the street. He turned to Nasbaum timidly: "Comrade Chairman, my wound isn't very serious."

"Never mind the comrade part of it!" Nusbaum hit back. "You can't become a comrade under pressure."

"I only wanted to tell you that it's not very serious. I am only going down into the drug store to get some application. I'll return to work presently."

Upon this the chairman turned to the operators: "Fellow workers! The matter will be settled now once and for all! Do you want Harry back into the shop?"

The operators looked at Harry's shredded clothes and swarthy frown. They exchanged glances silently with Harry and the chairman.

"I say, do you want him to ride on your backs and get paid for it?" Simon Nusbaum looked straight into their faces as he pointed at Harry.

"NO—O-o-o!" came the answer from fifty throats. Harry opened his mouth with amazement.

"Harry, so far as this shop is concerned you have heard the answer." Nusbaum told the stitcher.

Harry was quick with his retort. "I am not going to return to work together with this clique."

The workers began to clamor on all sides: "Out with the fat water-pig!" "Out with him!" "Put him out!"

They swept him out into the hallway and slammed the door. The boss watched from his office but didn't move.

When the clamor subsided he came over to Nusbaum: "We can't get another stitcher in the labor bureau today," he said.

"Tomorrow is another day," the chairman answered. "We will send a committee of workers to the labor bureau to make sure that the union sends a stitcher for tomorrow morning." Again he turned to the workers: "A 'holiday' this afternoon. Be sure to come to work early in the morning!"

Resignedly the workers rolled down their sleeves. "Ah, the water-pig! Another day's work lost!" They took their jackets off from the nails in the wall and one by one they plodded out of the shop filing into the street after Nusbaum.



Herb Kruckman

"AND SO WE SEE THAT THE SPIRITUAL GAINS OF THE DEPRESSION—"

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"AND SO WE SEE THAT THE SPIRITUAL GAINS OF THE DEPRESSION—"

HERB KRUCKMAN

Greeting to Barbusse

Mark Marvin

HENRI Barbusse is a twentieth century Isaiah whose flaming phrases are not inspired by a primitive god and patriarchal sense of justice but are based on a thorough comprehension of revolutionary knowledge. Since his participation in the World War, previous to which he was a 'lost' bourgeois individualist seeking desperately for some vague truth, he has grown steadily in stature until today he is recognized as one of the few major writers dominating world literature. The great imperialist slaughter was the event that awakened him from a literary psychosis which afflicted most of the writers of his generation. It is to his growing awareness of the class struggle and his growing participation in that struggle that he owes the great qualities which his work, since the publication of *Under Fire*, contain. Today, as editor of *Le Monde* and an associate of *L'Humanité* as well as many other left-wing publications throughout Europe and America, he exerts a tremendous influence on world opinion.

Henri Barbusse was born in 1873, the son of a minor French writer of small but adequate income. His first work, which was sponsored by his father-in-law, the well-known symbolist poet, Catulles Mendes, was a slight book of poetry entitled *Les Pleureuses*. In 1903 and 1908 two novels entitled *Les Suppliants* and *L'Enfer* appeared. Space is lacking here to describe these early novels which were followed by a volume of short stories in 1914. These stories, published on the eve of the Great War, have as their theme the heartbreaking moral anomalies and tragedies of life. The first story, *The Bad Little Moon*, concerns itself with twelve soldier comrades who separate when the moon hides itself above the battle field of some Balkan war and unwittingly kill each other.

Under Fire marked Barbusse's definite turning to the left. A volunteer at the beginning of the war (he was forty years old then), he was quickly shot down and invalided home, covered with decorations for bravery. His book, which appeared in 1916, was the first important novel to come out of the World War and it, happily, was a proletarian approach to the imperialist blood orgy. This photographic dissection of the life of the common soldier in the trenches has never been surpassed. After several hundreds of pages describing the intense misery of the soldiers, he ends his work with a passing tribute to Liebknecht and an impressively revolutionary final chapter entitled *Dawn*.

Think of the courage required to do this in France in 1916! In the final chapter the author and his wounded, shattered, dying comrades (all of whom are faced with drowning in the fluid mud which is so overpowering that it has successfully stopped the battle of the day) curse the imperialist war-makers, the "divines" who stand solidly behind their respective masters for the profit they too reap, the generals, and the jingoists: "After all, why do we make war? We don't know at all why, but we can say *who* we make it for . . . it's for the pleasure of a few ringleaders that we could easily count . . . whole nations go to slaughter . . . in order that the gold-striped caste may write their princely names in history, so that other gilded people of the same rank can contrive more business . . . and we shall see . . . that the divisions between mankind are not what we thought . . ." Over six hundred thousand copies of this great attack on war have been sold. All over the earth its readers have learned that nationalist wars are the scourge of humanity and that one final conflict to wipe out the source of these wars is what humanity needs. Or, as Barbusse en-*Chains*: "Take hold of the sacred vestments of the pontiffs of patriotism, democracy, religion, and defile them in the dust . . . for wisdom's, for pity's sake, revolt!"

Under Fire did not exhaust all that its author had to say

about war; nearly all his subsequent work contains some material based on the subject of war. In 1919 he published a novel, *Light*, which reveals how a conformist, a white-collar worker who had thought his life to be fixed in an eternal round of small comforts is transformed by the war into a seeker after revolutionary truth and justice. He returns to his home, wounded, to find that his new vision has completely altered his past conceptions of ideas, friends, enemies, etc. *Light* capably portrays the stable pre-war French society with its vicious caste system, its isolated revolutionaries, and its crass social injustice. It contains further remarkable pages of description of the battles, the wounded, and the dead; therein too are emphasized the sharp class differences between the officers and the ordinary soldiers.

His next novel, *Chains*, is one of the great novels of our times. Had Barbusse not been a revolutionary the bourgeois literary journals to this day would be filled with works of pious exegesis. Like Proust and Joyce he would be discussed where ever intellectuals meet. But because he is a militant revolutionary, and because this book is pregnant with dynamite, the literary world has erected a wall of discreet silence around *Chains*. It is a vast and exceedingly accurate epic depicting the struggles of the masses since the dawn of time to achieve equality and liberty. Barbusse uses the device of a contemporary who has flashbacks of ancestral memory; the stress is on what is remembered rather than on the device used. As sheer writing the book stands with *Ulysses* or *Remembrance of Things Past*. The theme is a tremendous one and is beautifully handled. Only a writer equipped with the Marxist key to history would dare to attempt such a canvas; and only a Marxist could delve into the muddy stream of history and acquit himself so capably in demonstrating "the terrible homogeneity of history!" How splendidly he unmasks the hideous face of oppression, of academic and religious lies! How fierce and convincing is his anger and hatred "against the too visible causes of the great social calamities!" *Chains* deserves to be widely read by American intellectuals, for it belongs in the very highest ranks of literature, and of revolutionary literature in particular.

Barbusse must be one of the busiest men in the world. Besides producing a steady flow of books (most of which must go unmentioned here for lack of space) and editing various publications he is active in the defense of political prisoners. He has travelled extensively in the USSR and has published a book upon his impressions not yet translated into English. Then too he is an indefatigable worker for peace. He helped to organize the highly successful Amsterdam Anti-War Congress as well as the great one held in New York beginning Sept. 29, which he attended. Barbusse is an active member of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers and in the *New Freeman* of Nov. 5, 1930 he wrote an excellent article on proletarian literature in anticipation of the Charkov Conference. The England which freely permits the neurotic dopehound, Jean Cocteau to come and go freely across its borders denied him the right of entry last year.

Barbusse deserves the highest welcome from the revolutionary forces of America. No other writer outside of Maxim Gorky and Romain Rolland has done as much as he to combat class injustice, imperialist provocation of the Soviet Union. No other writer has done more than he to wrest away the stinking, sterile hand of bourgeois influence from younger writers. The *New Masses* and the John Reed Clubs of the United States welcome him with comradely greetings.

Correspondence

A Poet Takes His Stand

Stanley Burnshaw, whose poetry was a feature of the New Masses in 1928 and 1929, has sent us a copy of this letter to the editor of the Modern Monthly:

R.F.D. 2, Oakland, Maine.
August 30, 1933.

Mr. V. F. Calverton
New York, N. Y.

Dear George:

The August issue of the Modern Monthly, having been sent to Ithaca, has just reached me. I am sorry it did not come sooner, for in the meantime I have returned proofs of two poems which (I imagine) are to appear in September. Had the present number arrived earlier I should not have returned the proofs. However, your September issue is probably already through the press and it is too late to prevent the poems from appearing.

I fear that these poems must be my last contribution to the Monthly. Your invitation extended to me some weeks ago to join the Monthly staff I must refuse, as well as to continue conducting the Student Forum. Furthermore, I cannot now agree to your writing an introduction to my "Pennsylvania Mill Town" volume which you have been generous enough to recommend to Scribners.

All of this, of course, requires explanation, particularly since we have spent a few hours (last December) discussing your controversies with the Communist Party and I sympathized with your position. Moreover, in conducting the Student Radical section for your magazine during the past six months I came to understand the Monthly on a fairly intimate basis and approved of it enough to lend my aid. Occasionally it published articles which caused me some misgivings, but I was convinced that whatever harm it might have been objectively fostering by lending support to elements antipathetic to the working-class was more than compensated for by its influence in recruiting new readers and writers to the support of the working-class. This conviction, of course, was reinforced by my belief in your personal sincerity.

I am not questioning your personal sincerity, but after having read Mr. Eastman's article in the current issue I am forced to regard your personal sincerity as no longer relevant—as a purely academic question. It is impossible for me to escape the conclusion that any magazine publishing such an article as Eastman's is in effect operating to the detriment of the working-class. Such a magazine, although "not officially responsible" for the views of its contributors, is in actuality lending its pages and its influence to a terrific attack—the fiercest I have read in any magazine—against the only group

of individuals devoting all of their energies to the cause of the Communist Party; but as a writer entirely sympathetic to the working-class, I cannot lend support to an organ which is attacking the only party devoted to the working-class cause.

As a writer I was of course especially interested in any discussion about art in the Soviet Union, being myself somewhat aware of the situation. Eastman's characterization of the artist in the Soviet Union as a puppet subjected to a stupid militarized discipline is nothing less than a calumny. All of the facts at my disposal clearly show that there is actually more freedom for artists in the Soviet Union than in any other country. In Germany, where even liberal, anti-Marxist writings are burned; in America, where writers as well-known as Dos Passos are refused publication by such a house as Harper's; Japan, where writers sympathetic to the working-class are jailed, in China, where they are decapitated; in Poland, Italy, and Yugoslavia, where they are tortured—would Mr. Eastman say that in any of these countries the artist has more freedom than in Russia, where non-Communist writers are subsidized by the State, where anti-Marxist philosophical idealists (such as Losey) publish regularly at the rate of a book a year, and where the government has refused to grant its Imprimatur to any single one of the various art-credos despite repeated requests? It would seem that in judging the condition of the artist in Soviet Russia one must choose between Mr. Eastman's point of view on the one hand or that of Andre Gide, Romain Rolland, Gorki, Dreiser, Anderson, Dos Passos, on the other? . . .

What can be the effect of Eastman's article on the readers of the Monthly? The article alienates individual readers not as yet entirely won over to the proletarian cause, by ridiculing the Russian Communist regime and the Communist Party of the U. S. By telling American writers that intolerable things must be expected in the event of a Soviet America instituted under the leadership of the Communist Party, Mr. Eastman helps to alienate writers from lending their sympathy and active support to the cause of the proletariat in America.

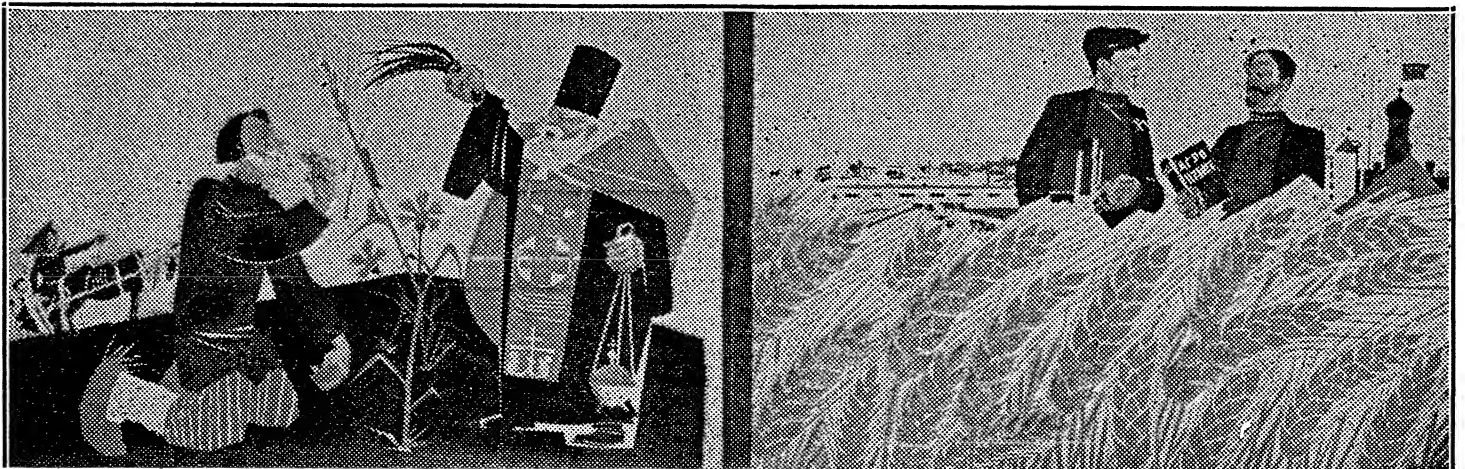
In view of the present number of the Monthly as well as certain previous articles which caused me misgivings I am now driven to realize that the net operative result of the magazine is damaging to the cause of the proletariat. It is evident that for me as a working-class sympathizer the prospect of my lending further support to such an organ is impossible. I cannot align myself with a periodical which in actual analysis is shown to give aid and comfort to the enemies of the proletariat. It is now clear to me that the New Masses is the only literary-and-art-magazine in America devoted to the interests of the working-class. And I believe every working-class sympathizer must inevitably come to this conclusion.

In spite of the fact that I still believe you to be personally honest, the result of your actions forces me to regard you as an enemy of the American working-class. And the net operative results of the Modern Monthly force me to regard it as a magazine not entitled to the support of anyone who has the interests of the working-class at heart.

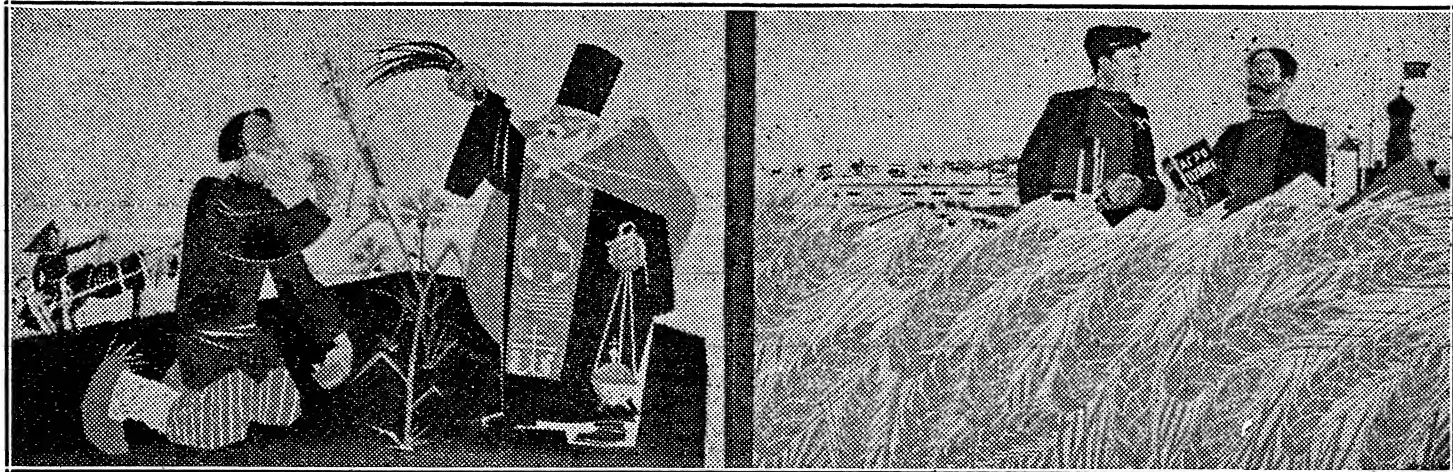
Sincerely,

STANLEY BURNSHAW

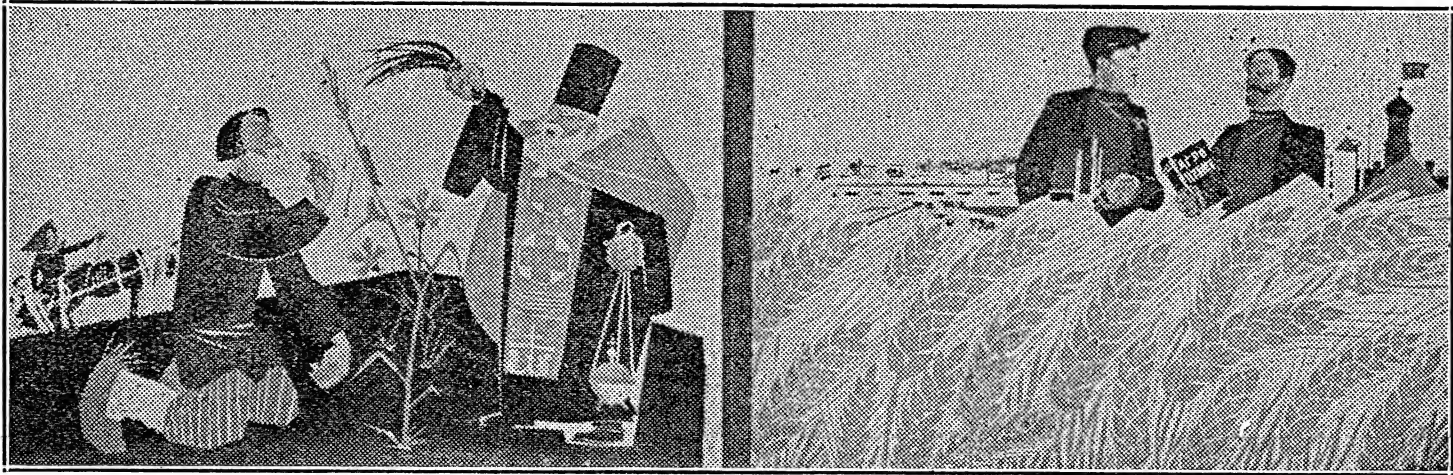
P. S.—I'm sending a copy of this letter to the New Masses.



TWO SOVIET RUSSIAN POSTERS



TWO SOVIET RUSSIAN POSTERS



TWO SOVIET RUSSIAN POSTERS

The Screen

A Mexican Trailer

On the night of Sept. 22, speaking on the occasion of the world premiere of *Thunder Over Mexico*, Upton Sinclair announced from the stage of the Rialto Theatre in New York that inasmuch as Eisenstein himself had agreed that a political film of Mexico could not be made by a Russian, that therefore the protests and attacks against Sol Lesser's version of the film were futile and ridiculous. An hour later an outburst of hisses, loud boos and indignant outcries greeted the first public showing of *Thunder Over Mexico*, a political white-washing and eulogy of the infamous Wall street puppet regime of Calles-Rodriguez. The man who some ten years ago had written a book to prove that all art is propaganda had lent himself as a prime mover in the shameful task of re-creating 234,000 feet of film shot by a revolutionary Soviet director into seven reels of infantile and boring narrative winding up with an impudent glorification of "The New Mexico."

The spectators present at the opening of the film came with an enthusiastic expectation drummed up by months of an uninterrupted barrage of ballyhoo on the part of Mary Craig Sinclair's Mexican Picture Trust Company. The film they saw has since been neatly characterized by Thornton Delehanty, of the New York Evening Post, as "a trailer" which "will make you that much more clamorous for *Que Viva Mexico!*"

Upton Sinclair's counter-blasts to the rising wave of opposition to the release of *Thunder Over Mexico* have been very conveniently directed by him against a small group of "art enthusiasts" whose worship of Eisenstein's "passion for the macabre, the grotesque, and especially for the synthetic ideational image-form . . ." has so far been the motivating cause for their moral indignation. These individuals, whose protests were for the most part based upon rumors, personalities and gossip, thereby provided the sponsors of *Thunder Over Mexico* with a man of straw needed to divert the underlying political issues involved, into innocuous channels—with the further advantage of providing a lot of "inside dope" publicity copy.

There is no need to dwell at length upon the cretinistic performance of the gentlemen who "assembled" *Thunder Over Mexico*. Its reception even by those critics of New York's metropolitan press whose ultimate test for cinematic values is summed up in the word "entertainment," may be looked upon as the *coup de grace* for the film even as a production in Hollywood's understanding of the term,* not to speak of "a great masterpiece of art." Our primary concern is the inescapable fact that *Thunder Over Mexico* is, politically speaking, a distortion of content. The causes for its formal perversion can only be understood if they are regarded as flowing directly from the conscious inversion of Eisenstein's original intentions.

Thunder Over Mexico carries out fully Sinclair's promise to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs that "the film would not show the people of present-day Mexico as mistreated or unhappy." Said "mistreatment" and "unhappiness" have therefore been ascribed to the regime of Porfirio Diaz, some thirty years ago. By means of what unscrupulous trickery? An explanatory title and a couple of shots of Diaz's portrait culled from Eisenstein's 234 reels of negative, a large part of which was shot for the sole purpose of sidetracking the Mexican Government spies who Sinclair has admitted, trailed the Soviet director during every minute of his stay in Mexico. But at that the story of the peon Sebastian, "whose story is that of all the others," is not half so pathetic as that of the average Hollywood "Western" cowboy hero, and we have seen Warner Baxter interpret more convincing villains than the stiff-whiskered operetta "ham" who rapes (It is not clear whether the girl is

really raped. Mordaunt Hall of the New York Times never got it that way. As far as he could see, she was merely "insulted.") the peon's betrothed. This brand of cheap "play," unfit for a Coney Island sideshow, is palmed off on American movie audiences as the work of Eisenstein, creator of *Potemkin!*

A prologue that strives for ethnological profundity and succeeds in being only a series of self-conscious "still" travelogue shots. The rape (?) of a peon's girl by a guest of the *hacendado*. Attempt to save the imprisoned girl. Failure. Chase. More chase. Still more chase. And chase again. The *hacendado's* daughter is shot. The hero is captured. "And for you, the punishment of the horses!" Burial of Sebastian and two other peons up to their necks. Soldiers on horseback trample their heads. Grafted sound effects that might have been taken from a "Silly Symphony." Dark, dark skies. Composite shots of peons listlessly climbing, climbing, climbing. More composite shots. More superimpositions. More "wipe-offs." Believe it or not, but even Regina Crewe was bored to tears!

Out of this godawfully boring recital in which the peons are at all times shown as characterless "passive resisters" (a direct slander against the heroic revolutionary traditions of the Mexican masses!), we are "wiped-off," "overlap-dissolved" and "super-imposed" into Mr. Sol Lesser's idea of "Revolt!" A puff of smoke, some fireworks sparkling meaninglessly in the night, and a small pile of burning straw! There is your revolution! Shades of *Ten Days* and *Potemkin!* The fraud of the scenes entitled "Revolt!" set a new mark for "the best cutter in Hollywood—Sol Lesser" (Sinclair) a man who turned out military recruiting pictures during the World War and is about to release a film by Carveth Wells slandering the Soviet Union.

As to the handling of the anti-religious material shot by Eisenstein in Mexico, we will limit ourselves to a quotation from the review of "Thunder" that appeared in the New York Times of September 25th:

"In one or two scenes M. Eisenstein derides religion, but later the title writer does the reverse, for one gathers that present conditions in Mexico come, in the film, as an answer to a girl's prayer." (Our emphasis —S.B., T.B.).

"Give us the strength of our fathers!" prays the peon girl. Presto! A "New Mexico" appears before your eyes, full-blown with marching men, blaring trumpets, football teams, and the dynamic rhythms of the "wheels of industry" manned by former peons. This about the Mexico where not a foot of soil remains unstained with the blood of oppressed peons! This about the "new Mexico" that suppresses the Communist Party and murders its heroic leaders! This about the Mexico where the feudal-reactionary Catholic Church is daily regaining its foothold thanks to the Wall Street inspired policies of the Rodriguez military dictatorship! This about a country where the peasantry is being driven from the land and massacred by roving bands of *cristeros* and armed assassins of the "Ligue De Defensa Social!"

"I promised the Mexican Foreign Minister . . ."

Rarely has there been such unreserved unanimity in the reception of a film by the critics of the daily press. It is both highly significant and an inescapable index to the fraudulent nature of *Thunder Over Mexico* that not a single one of them was in the least fooled by what was being offered them as "Eisenstein's masterpiece." This applies even to those critics who tried to keep a more or less straight face by repeated references to the "beauteous photography" (Boehnel, World-Telegram) of Eduard Tisse.

Even the Socialist New Leader complained that "all there is to the revolution is a bonfire inside a fire-proof hacienda(!)"

Credit for the most damning unmasking of the publicity lies upon which *Thunder Over Mexico* came riding into the Rialto Theatre, must, however, go to none other than the cynically outspoken Film Daily, a publication that knows no other language save that of the profit-seeking motion picture exhibitors. The Film Daily advises the exhibitors:

"A forced and artificial ending with the help of written titles shows Mexico of today freed from the peonage system and everybody happy . . . Plug it on Eisenstein's reputation . . ." (Our emphasis).

SAMUEL BRODY
TOM BRANDON

* "The picture, as is, will not get to first base, either as a critic's picture or in straight box-office parlance." VARIETY, Sept. 26, 1933.

Books

Geared to History

THE KAISER GOES: THE GENERALS REMAIN, by Theodor Plivier. Macmillan. \$2.

Although it takes the form of a novel this book is not fiction. It is not another tale spun out of the groping consciousness of an author. It is history, movingly translated into terms of the individual; it is swift narrative that never gets away from its solid basis of historical fact. It is the very stuff of actuality and event thrown by an artist into permanent form—the story of Germany in revolt on the eve of the armistice.

No more exciting theme for a novelist's vision could have been chosen, unless it be the November days of the Russian revolution. The last futile gasps of a futile war; the downfall of the vaunted Prussian military system, and with it the tæter-tottering of the whole structure of Junkerdom; the panic in the hearts of generals and ministers and bureaucrats; the collapse of the government machinery and morale; the exhaustion and despair of the workers and sailors and soldiers, driven beyond endurance by hunger and misery—here we have the material of a revolutionary situation. Note its accurate correspondence with Lenin's famous analysis: "only when the masses do not want the old regime, and when the rulers are unable to govern as of old, then only can the Revolution succeed" (*The Infantile Sickness of Leftism*). Here is tinder waiting for a spark. And the spark is struck by the sailors at Kiel. When they learn that on the very eve of peace the commanders mean to send them against the English fleet, they sabotage and cripple the ships. The revolt spreads swiftly—to Hamburg, inland to Hanover, finally to Berlin.

The action at Berlin is crucial. It represents the third stage in the movement of events, the third act in Plivier's remarkable dramatization of the revolutionary dialectic. The first stage has been the existence of a revolutionary situation, and Plivier with a knowledge of the two elements required calls his first two chapters "The Rulers" and "The Ruled." The second stage is the beginning and spread of the revolt, depicted in the next chapters, "Kiel" and "The Mutineers Move Inland." The third stage must concern itself with what happens to the raw material of the revolt. Of course leadership has sprung up naturally and spontaneously from the ranks of the soldiers and workers, but it is a leadership of the moment, a bit bewildered and for the most part politically untrained. The organized direction of the seizure of power can be given only by a mature leadership, working to channel and sustain the revolutionary energy of the people. It is Berlin that must be the theatre for this climatic scene. In "Berlin Marches" Plivier describes the push and thrust of power on the fateful November 9, 1918—the marching of workers, the mass demonstrations, the shutting off of the dynamos, the calling of a general strike, the fraternizing of workers and soldiers, the defection of supposedly loyal regiments, the capture of the public buildings, the proclamation of a republic. And in it all he manages to convey a sense of the confusion as well as of the onward movement—the cross purposes, the bickering of leaders, the jockeying of groups for advantage.

Through all the the action the issue that is dominant in the book is—whom will the revolution carry into power? Will the Social-Democratic leaders—Ebert, Noske, Scheidemann, Wels—succeed in checking the torrential energy that has been unloosed and harnessing it to maintain a constitutional moderate state, even perhaps to retain the monarchy? Or will Liebknecht, Barth, Lebedour and Haase succeed in saving the revolution? In the last chapter—"Groener Speaking. . ."—is contained the answer. Everyone insists on the abdication of the Kaiser. But the Social Democrats have the advantage of organization and of the habitual obedience of the workers. And Ebert, to whom Prince Max of Baden has handed over the government, is realist enough to see that amidst all the ideological squabbles the unanswerable argument is the possession of the army. He

makes a pact with Groener and Hindenburg: the army and the Social Democratic government will stand together against the forces of disorder and communism. The Kaiser goes: the generals remain.

And with them remains the one thing in Germany that everyone should have combined in fighting—militarism. It was to be expected that monarchical Germany, like monarchical Russia, could not have converted itself immediately into a workers' republic. Some intermediate compromise government was historically inevitable. But by bringing the army into the situation Ebert introduced the enduring obstacle against converting the social-democratic seizure of power into a workers' revolution, the enduring element in determining the whole tragic sequence of events which has led to the present Nazi terror. This forms the real theme of the book—the breaking of the strength of the revolution, the betrayal of the German masses by the very men who should have organized and guided them. Plivier is not one to sentimentalize the masses. He sees them quite realistically. None the less the desperate tragedy that emerges from the book is the contrast between the direct, courageous, generous energies of the people and the niggardliness of the victory they finally obtained.

But not only as history, as a novel as well, this book is a brilliant achievement. Part of its strength is that it conveys so well the sense of movement in a revolution. There is suspense throughout. But it is not the trumped up and cardboard suspense of the usual novel plot. It is the suspense that is an inherent part of the revolutionary process, in which every minute counts and any minute may be decisive. There is also a masterly handling of the people in the book. This extends not only to the individual sailors and workers and women who represent the masses—gunner Max Muller and his wife Truda, Raumschuh the tall stoker, Job Bonczyk the furnace trimmer, Schorsch and Papendieck the sailors, Lange and Primelsack the workers in the power-house; it applies also to the prominent historical characters around whom the action revolves. They are portrayed swiftly but unforgettably. There is Scheidemann with his shining skull and his watery blue eyes; Noske, the big hulking carpenter, not yet "Butcher Noske," but already determined to repress the revolution; Ebert, canny and cautious, calmly having his soup while the republic is proclaimed; Liebknecht, just released from prison, burning with an intellectual passion; schoolmasterish, fanatical Emil Barth; Ludendorff of the heavy jowl, a glorified Prussian sergeant-major; Prince Max of Baden, a sensitive tragic figure, the only "humanitarian" whom the Junkers could scrape up to take over the chancellorship when Germany had to sue for peace. Even more skilful than the individual portrayals is the way the author has met the psychological problem of showing each person in his double aspect, giving a sense both of what sort of fellow he is "normally" and what he becomes in this topsy-turvy world of revolution, which has been stripped of most of its conventional values.

What all this proves again is that great fiction today must draw its strength from incisive social criticism. The dramatic and narrative excitement of the book is not something apart from the author's Marxist views. It flows directly from them. Those views are never made so explicit that they occupy the whole foreground. They are never presented heavy-handedly. But they are none the less there. They determine the treatment of the material. The thing that gives the book its greatness is the fact that it gears its narrative power to a firm analytical grasp of the meaning and movement of history.

MAX LERNER

The New Wonderland

OUR MOVIE MADE CHILDREN, by Henry James Forman, Macmillan. \$2.50.

We are indebted to the Motion Picture Research Council for proving finally, as established facts, many opinions we have long held about the cinema. For a long time there has been talk about the film as the greatest educative instrument in the modern world, about the ineradicable influence of the film upon children. Now, as a result of the four year investigation and survey carried on under the ægis of the Payne fund, twenty psychologists and social workers have been able to approach

us with concrete evidence on the influence of the motion picture on child behavior, the influence of the film on sleep, memory, conduct, delinquency, etcetera. These findings, to be published in a nine volume report this Fall by Macmillan have been summarized and popularized by Forman in the book now before us.

Forman concludes that the cinema is the greatest single cultural instrument since Gutenberg's printing press and that it stands second to no other medium as a pedagogic instrument. Though the evidence submitted is often inadequate this volume remains the first systematic survey of the motion picture and education; it should be on the shelf of every worker and intellectual, speaker and writer.

What may be for us far more revealing in the vital statistics gathered here, is the social composition of the celluloid world. In a cross section of 115 pictures it was found that 33 per cent of the heroes, 44 per cent of the heroines, 54 per cent of the villains and 63 per cent of the villainesses were wealthy or ultra wealthy. The largest single occupational classification for heroes was professional. The largest classification for all characters combined, including women, was *no* occupation. The second largest group of characters in the 115 pictures, ninety, were classified as commercial. The next two groups, there were eighty in each, were, occupation unknown or illegal, including such trades as smugglers, bootleggers, prostitutes, bandits, etc. Servants and "high society" characters made up the next group. These groups account for 640 out of 883 characters. The remaining quarter were scattered among many callings in which common labor is *not* included.

In 73 per cent of these films formal attire figured tremendously. 68 per cent of all characters appeared formally dressed. When one considers the great mobility of the camera the fact that 43 per cent of all settings in these 115 pictures were bedroom interiors, becomes especially significant. Living room and office scenes were next in number of sets.

This is the social composition of the new wonderland where there are no manual laborers, no manufacturing, no industry, where the silk top hat and the bedroom are the significant reality. The cinema, one must remember differs from other art mediums in that it requires a major capital investment. It is directly owned by the rentier class. Where we can find an uneven development in every other art, worker, petty bourgeois,

and master class artist developing side by side, in the motion picture we find the sharpest and most lucid expression of the imperialist world view and imperialist values.

Gentlemen, I give you the world—through the coupon clippers' eyes. Thank you Mr. Forman, for an intelligent informative book.
NATHAN ADLER

Bargain Sale

ANTHONY ADVERSE, by Hervey Allen, Farrar & Rinehart, \$3.00.

1224 pages for \$3.00, less than a quarter of a cent a page; real value even in these cut-rate days of omnibuses and giants. 124,000 have bought it; maybe some have read it. Romance, travel, history, philosophy, by the pound; buy now, for prices are soon to advance. Read all about the lovely Maria, her handsome lover, and her cruel husband. On page 93 Don Luis slays the gay young Denis; on page 106 he leaves Maria to die in the Alps; on page 107 he deposits their child on a convent's doorsteps. But ah, little did Don Luis think! The child, Anthony, is adopted by none other than his maternal grandfather, John Bonnyfeather. And now we're in for it. Travel: Italy, Cuba, Africa, Paris, London, New Orleans, Santa Fe, Mexico City. Romance: Faith, Angela, Neleta, Dolly, Florence, Dolores; what an advantage these modern romancers have when they come to their heroes' sex lives! History: the slave traders, Napoleon, Talleyrand, the Barings, the Rothschilds, the Lafittes, and other pirates. Philosophy: page after page of noble thoughts about Life and a real good Catholic moral. You must admit that's a lot for your money. You can't complain if the book has no living human beings, if it shows no insight into the past, if it's achingly dull. Funny, isn't it, that with millions of people craving an anodyne (something to make them forget their troubles, as Dr. Luttinger would parenthesize), and with lots of bright young men eager to meet the demand, our romantic novels turn out to be silly, lifeless apologies for outworn philosophies (cf. Wikder and Allen), seasoned with pornography (cf. Cabell and Allen), and abominably written (cf. Hergesheimer and Allen). Maybe even romance requires honesty, intelligence, and guts.

GRANVILLE HICKS

New Song

Maxwell Bodenheim

Words fall, like axes chopping violins.
Music is a nuisance
To the hangman's fallacies.
Break this parrot-sale
Of words for every bruise of life.
The rattle of tin cans,
Seven-eighths time—a worker's curse
Striking endlessly to make
The rattle of tin cans. We plod
Through mud: we choke the old, thick lies.
We shout, we strip,
We march through slime,
We tear the banners from the hands
Of proselytes and crumple them
To wipe the mud from face and chest.
We tattoo guns and shovels
On the belly of each priest,
On the flat feet of each priest.
We tear the axioms wrought on tissue paper
Painted to a marble front,
The roses of a whore's remorse,
The pose of industry and virtue
Bearing children in the U. S. Mint,
The hatred for the obvious
Hung out to dry on fire-escapes,
The subtleties of well-fed blind-men,

Bloodless doctors, holy esthetes
Flying from the pain in human flesh.
We shave the beards from sinecures.
We tramp, we burn,
We kill, we smudge
The chortles in the milky parlor
Of a patronizing yawn.
We jump with discords, smash the mandolin,
The hary that ripples in the stink
Of smiling-carping charlatans.
We stagger, rise,
We run and plow
Through the sleepy garden, monastery,
Groaning office, tall stone monolithes
Of a century's misery,
Of a century's calumnies
Spewing forth abortions
Between a saxophone and organ-hymn.
The mountain is a heap of sand.
The temple hides its lavatories.
Music is the rattle of tin-cans
In the slums where dawn
Finds a gray miscarriage
On the steps, where alleycats
Break into bottles of babies' milk
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Hugo Gellert's Book

Lithographs to Das Kapital, which has been five years in preparation, is finally to appear. Ray Long and Richard R. Smith will publish Hugo Gellert's interpretation of *Das Kapital* in November. It consists of sixty-one powerful lithographs accompanied by 60 pages of text. The price is \$3 and the book may be ordered through the New Masses book service.

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